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DOGME DOES HOLLYWOOD: A CASE OF MINOR CINEMA

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DOGME DOES HOLLYWOOD:
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Abstract

This thesis analyzes four films by the Danish directors and founders of the Dogme 95 movement, Thomas Vinterberg and Lars von Trier. The four films were released in their post-Dogme period: It's All About Love (Vinterberg, 2003), Dogville (von Trier, 2003), Manderlay (von Trier, 2005), and Dear Wendy (Vinterberg, 2005). The thesis places these films about America within the (film-)historical context of the Bush-Cheney regime's hard-right agenda, and the larger context of the Hollywood films released during the period. The theory of minor cinema — inspired by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari — is used to analyze the politics of space, language and perception in each of these films. The thesis argues for a new, inherently transnational use of minor cinema that accounts for Félix Guattari's contributions to the theory, often eclipsed by the more widespread reception of Gilles Deleuze.

Keywords: Thomas Vinterberg, Lars von Trier, Dogville, Manderlay, It's All About Love, Dear Wendy, Dogme 95, minor cinema, transnational cinema, Danish cinema, Félix Guattari, Gilles Deleuze.

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Introduction

Between 2003 and 2005, George W. Bush was the president of the United States and the nation was involved in a full-scale invasion and occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq. The ruling elite capitalized on the post-9/11 rhetoric of nationalism and national security amidst a climate of fear in an attempt to justify and gain popular support for these war campaigns. Some of the most poignant critiques of the United States during this period actually emerged from outside of the country, in the form of Thomas Vinterberg and Lars von Trier's It's All About Love (Vinterberg, 2003), Dogville (von Trier, 2003), Manderlay (von Trier, 2005), and Dear Wendy (Vinterberg, 2005). The four films were all released between 2003 and 2005, in the midst of the Bush-Cheney regime's hard right agenda. All four films are set in the United States, feature American actors, and American-movie-style English-language dialogue. They also address issues (both directly and allegorically) that permeated popular discourses throughout the Bush-Cheney era; such as the failure of democratic institutions, the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, capitalist exploitation, social and environmental degradation, and gun violence. These films channel strong oppositional sentiment to the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq and to American militarism more generally from within America and throughout the world. Each of these films construct fictionalized Americas to comment on the immediate post-9/11 era marked by the U.S.'s uncompromising neo-imperialist foreign policy and consolidation of its hegemonic position through two ideologically-driven wars. The four re-imaginations of America are quite different from one another, but all contain a shared

political vein of criticism that counter nationalist myths about America which abound in popular culture, cinema and television and work to support the dominant pro-war ideology of the Bush-Cheney era America.

The selected films (many co-productions) by Vinterberg and von Trier offer highly critical examinations of Americanism (and its resulting American exceptionalism) during this historical period, which did see the release of a number of Hollywood films critical of the United States, its foreign policy, and Americanism more generally, with varying degrees of success. Douglas Kellner's book Cinema Wars: Hollywood and Politics in the Bush-Cheney Era deals exclusively with the politics of representation in Hollywood cinema during this highly contested period. In his study, Kellner looks at a number of films that he feels challenged the ideology of Bush-Cheney America so effectively that "...as the standing of the US in the world declined to an all-time low, Hollywood could stand relatively tall and proud" (239). A brief list of the films that Kellner applauds for opposing the hard right-wing turn in U.S. political and public life include Sweeney Todd (Tim Burton, 2007), Star Wars III: Revenge of the Sith (George Lucas, 2005), V for Vendetta (James McTeigue, 2006), Stop-Loss (Kimberly Pierce, 2008), Syriana (Stephen Gaghan, 2004), United 93 (Paul Greengrass, 2006), Rendition (Gavin Hood, 2007), In the Valley of Elah (Paul Haggis, 2007), Lions for Lambs (Robert Redford, 2007) The Bourne Supremacy (Paul Greengrass, 2004), Lord of War (Andrew Niccol, 2005), War, Inc. (Joshua Seftel, 2008), Michael Clayton (Sydney Pollack, 2007) and The Manchurian Candidate (Jonathan Demme, 2004). I find it peculiar that Kellner is

so highly receptive to this body of films and their politics of representation given their mainstream-liberal messages at best, and pro-war nationalist messages at worst. In fairness, Kellner does balance his praise for these films with critiques of some of the era's more ideologically complicit films such as World Trade Center (Oliver Stone, 2006) and W. (Oliver Stone, 2008). This thesis is not concerned with troubling each of Kellner's analyses of these films, but it is worth pointing to the highly reactionary messages of some of these films, in order to make more readily apparent the political potency of Vinterberg and von Trier's films and to differentiate the Dogme brother's films from the politics of representation within Hollywood cinema at the time. These points will be emphasized in a much more in-depth and theoretical manner in a later analysis of The Interpreter (Sydney Pollack, 2005) as a majoritarian text.

For the moment, let us briefly consider how one might further deconstruct the political resistance in examples Kellner highlights as Hollywood productions critical of U.S. foreign policy. Stop-Loss is indeed at times critical of U.S. military stop-loss policy and the effect of war on the psyche of young men and their familial and romantic relationships, but ultimately the film falls back onto an ideology of pro-war nationalism with the AWOL soldier deciding the "right thing" to do is to go back to fight in Iraq (an ending not all different from the pro-Vietnam War film The Green Berets (John Wayne, 1968): "the war is this way, soldier!"). Rendition is critical of the U.S. outsourcing of torture, and graphically depicts the torturing of an American citizen of Egyptian descent who is racially profiled and falsely accused of terrorism. Despite this seemingly

progressive critique of U.S. rendition policies, the film wallows in an implicit racism, and goes to pains in order to stress that the racially visible victim has an NYU degree, a high paying job, and a wholesome white wife played by Reese Witherspoon in order to prove his American-ness and build outrage that such a person could be tortured. Additionally, the hero of the film ends up being a rogue CIA agent played by Jake Gyllenhall who stands up against torture, which has the effect of positing the agents of American state-repression as fundamentally sympathetic, sober-headed and good-hearted. And ultimately, the Star Wars and Bourne trilogies which, according to Kellner, "allegorize American imperialism" are illusionist films that fail to raise acute political consciousness or question the inherently political structure of Hollywood film-form and narrative. While these films may contain traces of progressive political sentiments, these political readings are either clouded by the spectacular preoccupations of the film or co-opted by the reactionary tendencies of the films, as is the case of Stop-Loss and Rendition.

Additionally, although one can locate films that critique US foreign policy during this period, these films are still vastly outnumbered by infantilizing and reactionary pop-culture Hollywood products. Many of the most popular films of the Bush-Cheney era were actually teen and family oriented film-series such as Star Wars, Spider-Man, Harry Potter, Lord of the Rings, and Shrek. The complete box office dominance of spectacular, illusionist films paired with the weak political critiques found in the Hollywood films with some sort of *liberal* political commitment does not support Kellner's conclusion that the "2000s have been comparable to the so-called Hollywood Renaissance of the late

1960s and 1970s" (239). Although certain films that Kellner highlights do criticize Republican party politics, policies and ideology (ie. Lions of Lambs and In the Valley of Elah), their critiques of Bush-Cheney era America nevertheless reproduce attitudes of American exceptionalism and are hopelessly bound to a project of American revivalism through *moderate* political reform.

In contrast, this thesis argues that It's All About Love, Dogville, Manderlay, and Dear Wendy provoke a much more radical reconsideration of politics and nationalism, or more specifically, American politics and American nationalism, precisely because each of these films positions nationalism itself as largely culpable for the slew of problems that populate the films and the world-at-large. This criticism grows organically out of the transnational quality of the films' production. The transnational component of these four films is what reinforces their critique of the United States, because they do not counter Americanism with a pro-Danish nationalism, but instead shift the political discourse from the "molar plane" of the nation-state to planes of "molecular politics" that constitute the personal, familial, sexual, corporeal, and the psychic.[1] It is for these reasons that this thesis seeks to employ a theory of "minor cinema" informed by the French post-structuralist thinkers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari to unpack how these films operate politically. I should add here that my attempt to read the films of the Dogme brothers Vinterberg and von Trier through the lens of the minor cinema paradigm is not without precedent. Mette Hjort's illuminating study Small Nation, Global Cinema: The New

[1] "Molar plane" and "molecular politics" are terms borrowed from the French post-structuralist thinkers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari.. Please see the chapter/plateau "10,000 B.C.: The Geology of Morals (Who Does the Earth Think It Is?)" in A Thousand Plateaus for a lengthier discussion of these terms.

Danish Cinema posits the New Danish Cinema as a minor cinema, and von Trier and Vinterberg are undoubtedly the two biggest names associated with this wave of cinematic production. While Hjort's study engages with theories of national cinema given its concern with a uniquely Danish phenomenon, Hjort is also conscious of how political power dynamics shift in the age of globalization, and pays close attention to the global, transnational character of New Danish Cinema. The move to *denationalize*, *hybridize* and *globalize* Danish cinema are some of the very reasons Hjort qualifies the New Danish Cinema a "minor cinema" (Hjort, Small Nation xi). Hjort argues that "the term *minor* points, then to the existence of regimes of cultural power and the need for strategic resourcefulness on the part of those who are unfavourably situated within the cultural landscape in question, be it in a national context or a more properly global one" (Hjort, Small Nation ix). Though Hjort finds New Danish Cinema – a national cinema – exemplary of minor cinema, she also recognizes how a contemporary minor cinema, given the socio-political organization of the world, necessarily operates in a global context and cuts across national borders.

Mette Hjort does mention the three of the films that form the basis of this thesis, but her project does not operate on the molecular level of film analysis. Although her book engages with the theory of minor cinema, Small Nation, Global Cinema is more concerned with the institutional and economic factors that produce a small national cinema than with a close reading of specific film-texts. This thesis departs from Hjort's approach to New Danish Cinema as minor cinema in order to engage more closely with

the film-texts at hand and as a result, to theorize how nationhood is deconstructed within the films themselves. In this respect, this thesis shares Hjort's interest in the transnationality of minor cinema, but concerns itself with connections between transnationality and the molecular (themes of love, sex, desire and violence), shifting our focus away from the molar (bureaucratic, legal, and economic institutions). The theory of "minor cinema" is used here in order to theorize how the films at hand – their narrative, thematics, aesthetics, use of language and colour, etc. – reinforces their transnational modes of production, distribution and exhibition (which Hjort identifies and analyzes). Not only does the institutional framework of New Danish Cinema constitute a minor cinema linked to a small nation status, as Hjort contends (Hjort, Small Nation ix), but the institutional framework also enables the pointed political critiques, voiced in an aesthetically experimental manner, that underpin It's All About Love, Dogville, Manderlay, and Dear Wendy.

Each of these films are minor in their own way, and are compatible with the numerous theorizations of minor cinema to varying degrees. The exact points of convergence and divergence between these films and different scholars' conception of the minor in film studies criticism is not the primary issue of this thesis. More important is that each of these films is minor in spirit: that they stand out as arguably the most critical texts of Americanism during the Bush-Cheney era and do so by shifting the plane of critique of the molar to the molecular. They render the personal/sexual, spatial, and linguistic political, play Hollywood cinema in a minor key through experimental aesthetic

strategies, and as a result, connect to transnational counter-publics[2] disenchanted with the Bush-Cheney regime, American nationalism/exceptionalism, and Hollywood complicity in maintaining this status quo. Ultimately, these four films can be read as works of minor cinema because they express desire for new socio-political relations that counter the dominant ideology of their historical moment. Just as the theory of minor cinema has been malleable and productively used to describe a variety of film cultures (as I discuss in chapter one of this thesis), this thesis argues that the Dogme brother's films outlined above can be considered works of minor cinema because they either enunciate across national borders, displace the characteristics of the major languages that are American English and Hollywood, or unleash part-signs that undercut the dominant signifying systems.

Chapter one of this thesis surveys the film studies scholarship on minor cinema. The chapter traces the origins of political discussions of the "minor" as a form of artistic resistance in Deleuze and Guattari's collaborative project Kafka: Towards A Minor Literature and also considers Guattari and Deleuze's solo writings on "minor cinema" and the legacy and influence of Deleuze and Guattari's writings on contemporary scholarship on the topic/concept. The chapter explores how the theory of "minor cinema" has been developed and productively used in a variety of contexts, in more established areas of study within film studies, such as; queer and gender studies, (trans)national cinema

[2] The term-counter publics comes from Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge's re-reading of Habermas in Public Sphere and Experience: toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere and also Michael Warner's book Publics and Counterpublics. Hjort invokes the term counterpublic in Small Nation, Global Cinema to explain how Dogme 95's critiques of mainstream culture resonated with, and was discussed by, diverse groups of people.

studies, and film aesthetics. This chapter also seeks to highlight Guattari's contributions to the theory of minor cinema, bringing to the fore texts that are regularly overlooked in contemporary scholarship on minor cinema. With the exception of Gary Genosko's writings, Guattari is often invoked as an appendage to Deleuze, only known and valued through this affiliation. The first chapter posits that Guattari's theorizations of minor cinema, a-signifying part-signs, and cinemas of *amour fou* and anti-psychiatry are vital to a more nuanced and multi-faceted comprehension of minor cinema that goes beyond the Deleuze-centric deployments of minor cinema today that dominate the scholarship on the concept. By ending with the "amour fou" of Guattari's minor cinema, the chapter opens the possibility that new theories of minor cinema must circumvent the nation-state/post-colonial model of minor cinema that grows out of Deleuze's "modern political cinema" in his book Cinema 2. This chapter's survey allows for the subsequent chapters to engage more closely with the aesthetic experimentation of the films at hand and to consider aspects of minor cinema advanced by Guattari that the reader may not otherwise have been familiar with.

Chapter two seeks to present It's All About Love, Dogville, Manderlay, and Dear Wendy as a constellation of minor film-texts. This chapter methodically applies Deleuze and Guattari's three characteristics of minor literature to the films to determine how these films feature a high coefficient of deterritorialization, render the personal political and constitute a collective enunciation. In applying each of these characteristics to the films, the chapter reveals that when taken together as an assemblage, the four films meet all

three characteristics laid out by Deleuze and Guattari and constitute an assemblage of minor cinema true to Deleuze and Guattari's original theorization of the minor. Furthermore, the chapter stresses that these films form a minor assemblage because they implicitly challenge the nation-state based model of minor cinema and provoke collective becomings that overrun the limits of the nation-state – a necessary form of becoming under a deterritorialized system of domination that also operates beyond the nation-state. The chapter encourages a thinking-through of collective enunciations so that such enunciations – or theoretical tools – are readily equipped to counter the stratified modes of domination under what Michael Hardt and Toni Negri term "Empire" through multitude-formation that defies the trappings of identity politics.

Chapter three analyzes the politics of space in the four films by Vinterberg and von Trier. because the critiques of nationalism in these films must necessarily be thought of in spatial terms, since they have consequences-in-space. Space is crucial to a political reading of these films because the nation-state maintains control through spatial demarcations and limitations – reterritorializations of nationalism. Space also plays an important role in narrative development and aesthetic construction/experimentation of these films, as the films poetically render the politics of spaces such as the small town, the plantation, the hotel and the mine shaft. This chapter argues that the films are meticulous in their examination of the (gendered) power dynamics of these spaces, or the flight from them, and employ Brechtian aesthetics to foreground the political nature of space in which the action is staged. The chapter also analyzes the importance of what

Deleuze and Guattari analyze in A Thousand Plateaus as striated and smooth space, in addition to drawing our attention to the recurring images of maps that populate these films, foregrounding the political dimension of their representations of space. In unpacking how these types of space function, the chapter also turns to Fredric Jameson's notion of cognitive mapping and Deleuze's concept of any-space-whatever to enrich how these films' representations of America as a fantasy space can be thought of as projections of a European cultural imaginary keen on situating itself amidst the forces of globalization.

Chapter four analyzes the politics of language in these films, which is also heavily influenced by the migration of people, tongues, and cultural products amidst globalization. Language is important to a close analysis of these films because they each feature English-language dialogue, even though both directors speak English as a second language and the films are largely funded from non-English speaking countries. An impoverished and estranged language is also a central component of the scholarship on minor cinema, taking as its point of departure Deleuze and Guattari's writings on the subject. This chapter not only takes into consideration Deleuze and Guattari's scholarship on the politics of a minor language, but also considers Mark Nornes' concept of "abusive" subtitling in order to make a case for the "abusive" dialogue in these films. The chapter argues that this "minor" dialogue undercuts the dominant ideology embedded in institutional modes of representation, disrupting the fine-tuned system and proliferating reception possibilities. The reason why the dialogue in these films can be considered

"abusive" is because the dialogue is so impoverished through botched accents, "tin" dialogue, and character speech that contradicts character acting that the aural qualities of the film de-naturalize American-movie-English and its role as a "global" or "universal" language. By pointing out the political possibilities of reading these intentionally disjointed and impoverished examples of film-dialogue, the chapter counters the reception of the films by mainstream critics and fan message boards as merely containing sloppy dialogue, and offers a new way of considering transnational productions with English-language dialogue.

The final chapter offers a close reading of Vinterberg and von Trier's film It's All About Love, the film that marks the minor assemblage's cutting edge of enunciation. The close reading returns to Guattari's writings on minor cinema and specifically, his theorization of cinematic a-signifying part-signs in his discussion of *amour fou.* The close reading of perception in It's All About Love in this chapter allows for Guattari's contributions to minor cinema to be brought to the forefront and put into productive use to analyze a film-text. This chapter also considers how a film, in this case It's All About Love, can be considered as a minor text for reasons other than those often provided in the contemporary scholarship on minor cinema. The chapter theorizes how Guattari's part-signs function to construct a potentially-mad subjectivity in It's All About Love. Since the use of colour and sound intensities in the films circumvent dominant modes of signification, the chapter offers a unique reading of It's All About Love as a work of minor cinema based on Guattari's writings on the topic. Finally, the chapter connects

Guattari's aesthetic preoccupations and interest in a cinema of anti-psychiatry/*amour fou* to the potentiality for collective enunciation. This theoretical move shows that Guattari's own solo writings on minor aesthetics can be linked up the concepts of collective enunciation and a people to come, connecting Guattari's work with Deleuze and Deleuze's own solo writings. In this final chapter I argue that It's All About Love calls upon the reader/spectator to fundamentally reconsider how a work of minor cinema can come to produce transnational counter-publics.

Chapter One: A Survey of the Film Studies Scholarship on 'Minor Cinema'

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's treatise Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature (1975) opens the discourse on 'the minor' with a consideration of Franz Kafka's modernist writing as a unique political reconfiguration of literature and language. In this specific case, Kafka (1883-1924) was a Czech Jew living in Prague during the Austro-Hungarian Empire whose use of German made the major language 'take flight' and 'stutter'. Kafka effectively used art to politicize the language of the colonizer. After their collaborative text on Kafka, Deleuze and Guattari returned the political importance of the 'minor' in relation to both language and cinema in a collaborative volume that some critics argue is the most important philosophical text of the 20th Century, A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia (1980).[3] Deleuze also further elaborated on the 'minor' in Cinema 2: The Time-Image (1985), while Guattari continued to use the concept in numerous lesser-known texts on cinema, semiotics, and aesthetics. Before delineating three characteristics of minor literature, Deleuze and Guattari summarize the principles that undergird their theory. They write: "A minor literature doesn't come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language" (Deleuze and Guattari, Kafka 16). Deleuze and Guattari continue to then outline the characteristics of a major/minor relationship between languages as expressed in literature. Quoting Deleuze and Guattari in his chapter titled "The Minor" in Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts, Ronald Bogue summarizes these characteristics as follows:

> [Firstly] that in a minor literature 'language is affected with a high coefficient of

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[3] Antonio Negri once claimed that A Thousand Plateaus was the most important philosophical text of the 20th Century. See Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's Empire (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard UP, 2000).

> deterritorialization', [secondly] everything 'is political', and [thirdly] 'everything takes on a collective value'; hence [Deleuze and Guattari] conclude, "the three characteristics of minor literature are the deterritorialization of language, the connection of the individual to a political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation" (10).

The characteristics listed above[4] compose the central arguments of Deleuze and Guattari's work on minor literature. Though the three-pronged definition of minor literature has proven malleable and multi-faceted, the heterogeneous quality of the concept can in part be attributed to its recurrence throughout Deleuze and Guattari's works. A Thousand Plateaus expands on the minor to include "musical, literary, linguistic as well as juridical and political references" (105). Deleuze continues to build on the concept he had developed earlier with Guattari in Cinema 2: The Time-Image, where he frames the minor in primarily post-colonial terms, citing Senegalese filmmaker Ousmane Sembene and Québecois documentary filmmaker Pierre Perrault as minoritarian artists. Current scholarship on minor cinema predominantly is indebted to Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature, A Thousand Plateaus, Cinema 2: The Time-Image and to a much lesser extent, Guattari's own writings on the topic, and has since expanded in a number of directions. This survey of theories of minor cinema doubly attempts to chart the trajectory of the discourse as it has expanded outwards from Deleuze and Guattari's primary texts on the minor, and also seeks to privilege Guattari's own rarely mentioned contributions to our

[4] A deterritorializing language, as discussed in the fourth chapter of this thesis, is also described by Deleuze and Guattari as impoverished, arid. The philosophers speak of a 'minor language' as exhibiting both extremes and intensities as well as a "withered vocabulary" (Kafka 22) and a stripped-down "sense": a "skeleton of sense or a paper cutout" (Kafka 21). The films that 'do Hollywood' in this thesis (which follow in the wake of the Dogme movement with its 'vow of chastity') also play with this minimalism (stripped down film sets in Lars von Trier, etc.) and this drive toward intensities.

understanding of minor cinema. In the later chapters of the thesis, I will return to Guattari's unique use of the concept in order to account for the political potential of Thomas Vinterberg's It's All About Love.

The predominant focus on Deleuze rather than Guattari in the film studies scholarship on minor cinema certainly warrants further investigation. Though Deleuze and Guattari collaboratively evoke the concept of a minor literature and the minor in Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature and in A Thousand Plateaus, I argue that the two philosophers have very different conceptions of 'minor cinema' (these differences are often glossed over in film studies scholarship).

As articulated in Cinema 2, Deleuze's minor cinema is grounded in the postcolonial situation and the examples Deleuze gives of "modern political cinema" like Perrault and Sembene engage with questions of postcoloniality. The importance of postcoloniality to Deleuze's conception of minor cinema has been productively expanded on in recent scholarship on minor cinemas, with special attention paid to the interrelated and overlapping concepts of minority, accented, interstitial, intercultural, third, imperfect, exile, diasporic, and ethnic cinema. All of these categorizations, theories and approaches – like minor cinema – grow out of and comment upon the postcolonial situation[5]. These *types* of cinema and their relationship to minor cinema will be discussed later in this chapter after a look at how Guattari's minor cinema differs from Deleuze's.

As sociologist Gary Genosko explains, Guattari's work is often overshadowed by his collaborations with Deleuze (Genosko, A Critical Introduction 1) and it should be

[5] Some of these terms, like intercultural, for example, complicate the unproblematized notion of postcoloniality, but I use the term here for lack of a better, or more encompassing word.

pointed out that he has a distinct understanding of minor cinema, although it remains consistent with "Deleuze's deployment of the anti-colonialist, revolutionary Third Cinema" and its political implications (Genosko, A Critical Introduction 134). Guattari's minor cinema diverges from Deleuze's minor cinema of subaltern peoples engaged in anti-colonial struggle to posit a minor cinema of madness, desire, intensities and *amour fou*. It is interesting to note that the films that Guattari mentions in his delineation of minor cinema are quite different in origin, thematics, and historical-political context from Deleuze's examples of Sembene or Perrault. Alternatively, Guattari's minor cinema focuses on issues unique to the urban centres of industrial western nations and includes the work of well-known art-film directors from America.

In his chapter on Guattari's minor cinema in his critical guide to Guattari's writing, Genosko considers Guattari's minor cinema of anti-psychiatry in-depth. The films under discussion are Asylum (Peter Robinson, 1972), a film with an anti-psychiatric current about R.D. Laing (Genosko, A Critical Introduction 150); Fous à délier (March 11 Collective, 1976) which deals with the psychiatric repression of a hospital and the actions of labour activists; Fists in the Pocket (Bellochio, 1965), a film about a troubled young man who lapses into epileptic seizures due to familial repression; Urgences (Raymond Depardon, 1988) and Histoire de Paul (René Feret, 1974), vérité-like films that follow the patients in a psychiatric emergency wards and insane asylums; and Commes les anges déchus de la planète Saint-Michel (Jean Schmidt, 1978), a film about homeless people in Paris and the influence of drugs and racism on their lives[6]. Guattari's understanding of

[6] Guattari's interest in a minor cinema of anti-psychiatry could also be extended to Ce gamin-là (Renaud Victor, 1975), a film about a community of autistic children that he mentions in his essay Cracks in the Street.

these films as works of minor cinema compliments Deleuze's focus on postcoloniality by making the concept productive for multiple geographical and urban settings, individuals and social groups. In considering these anti-psychiatry films as minor, the term takes on a multiplicity of meanings and usages. Of further relevance for this thesis, I believe that Guattari's interest in a minor cinema of anti-psychiatry could have, barring his death in 1993, also been extended to Danish television shows and films like The Kingdom (Lars von Trier, 1994) Breaking the Waves (Lars von Trier, 1996), The Idiots (Lars von Trier, 1998) and The Celebration (Thomas Vinterberg, 1998). These films engage with issues of mental health and its connection to psychiatry and science, hospitalization, sexuality, family, incest, and religion – the very themes that crop up throughout Guattari's political writings.[7]

Given Guattari's background training with Lacan, and work at the La Borde clinic, along with his life-long interest in the psyche, it only makes sense that these interests of Guattari's came to converge with the theory of the minor he developed with Deleuze. Much is at stake in considering anti-psychiatry films as works of minor cinema, since Guattari urges us to consider psychiatry as inherently political because of its power to condition subject-formation, or in Guattari's more formal terminology, "subjectivization." Such a consideration is also in line with Guattari's insistence on an understanding and praxis of micro-politics. Molar psychiatric institutions, as dominant forces of subject-formation in cases of the mentally-ill, also operate on this micropolitical plane and are politically invested in certain familial, sexual, and psychical formations – political realms

[7] These earlier films by the Dogme brothers express their artistic concerns about how power functions micro-politically in small groups, hospital basements, church pews and dinner tables, and also how that power in turn affects and is affected by the psyche.

all-too-easily excluded from the discourse on molar politics and its corresponding institutions. Guattari and his minor cinema work against and propose alternatives to the tenets of psychoanalysis that form the dominant modes of thought in psychiatric institutions (for example, Guattari critiques the problematic notion of lack used to account for the psyche, neurosis, and the triangulation of desire that fuels the confining domain of Oedipus).

In addition to envisioning a new cinema of anti-psychiatry, Guattari also stresses the importance of a minor cinema that would depict concrete political struggles. Three of the films Guattari identifies as examples of 'minor cinema' include Coup pour coup (Martin Karmitz, 1972), a documentary-style film about the solidarity of female labourers at a textile factory in France; Germany in Autumn (Alf Brustellin, Hans Peter Cloos, et al., 1978) an omnibus film that mixes documentary and fiction in depicting the kidnapping of a businessman by the Red Army Faction in 1970s Germany; and Mourir à trente ans (Romain Goupil, 1982) a documentary about the suicide of far-left militant Michel Recanati who was friends with the film's director Romain Goupil. Although these films deal with possible minor forms of expression, or formal experimentation that blends documentary and fiction, Guattari is attracted to them out of their solidarity with leftist political struggles. He is inspired by how the films function on the level of molecular politics (focusing on the women of a particular factory, or a particular militant faction) as opposed to the level of grand mass movements. These films dialogue with Guattari's cinema of anti-psychiatry, but they also expand his idea of minor cinema and extend it to include political filmmaking aligned with minor political struggles outside of the

psychiatric institutions, in schools, factories and the streets.

Not surprisingly, given Guattari's political commitments and interest in films that reflect these commitments, Guattari explicitly denounces commercial cinema for its co-option by capitalism and its tendency to control and manipulate like an inexpensive drug (Guattari, Chaosophy 246). Guattari writes: "The successive inventions of the talkies, of colour, of television, etc. insofar as they enriched the possibilities of expressing desire, have led capitalism to take possession of cinema, and to use it as a privileged instrument of social control" (Chaosophy 244)[8]. Clearly for Guattari, any minor cinema that struggles on behalf of peoples oppressed by capitalism, needs to contest the capitalist interests embedded in the form and themes of mainstream, commercial filmmaking. But this condition does not predetermine what forms a minor cinema can take, or what themes will constitute a work of minor cinema. Guattari explains that "[o]ne can make a film having life in a convent as its theme that puts revolutionary libido in motion; one can make a film in defence of revolution that is fascist from the point of view of the economy of desire" (Chaosophy 246). To categorize minor cinema by linking it to more specific, restricted notions of genre, form, nationhood or political sensibility would be to limit the micropolitical potential of minor cinema, and undermine its political-theoretical usefulness. In summing up this important tendency of Guattari's minor cinema, Genosko

[8] Guattari also posits a similar phenomenon in the mass-media more generally. He writes: "Doesn't the all-powerful position of the mass media nowadays supply a perfect demonstration of the fact that any link in the social chain can lend itself, without the least apparent resistance, to the levelling and infantilizing effects of the capitalistic production of signifiers?" ("Postmodern Dead End" 41). But also see "Toward an Ethics of the Media" where Guattari advances the revolutionary potential of media. He argues that despite the dismal situation wherein "television winds up functioning like a hypnotic drug, cutting off subjects from their environment, and contributing to the dissolution of already thinly stretched family and social relationships" (17), the media, including the Internet (then in its infancy) could "open [individuals] up to helping one another, the thrill of knowing the other, liberating them from racism and xenophobia" (21).

explains that "dominant values can be attacked in a variety of ways within film praxis" (A Critical Introduction 149). Two more film examples put forth by Guattari further emphasize how dominant values can be attacked in films with quite different approaches than the films of anti-psychiatry and the more politically militant films mentioned above.

In his writings on 'minor cinema,' Guattari also discusses Badlands (Terrence Malick, 1973) and Eraserhead (David Lynch, 1976) two works of the emerging American Independent cinema in the 1970s. Needless to say, these films differ quite markedly from the above-mentioned films. Regardless of their commercial appeal, Guattari praises Eraserhead as one of the greatest films on psychosis (Genosko, A Critical Introduction 149) and lauds Badlands as a "film displaying the effects of *amour fou*: 'the film is only there to serve as support for a schizophrenic journey'" (Genosko, A Critical Introduction 122). Badlands may seem most anomalous as an act of minor cinema, as on one level it seems to follow certain conventions associated with commercial cinema: a heterosexual youth romance, road movie tropes, narrative coherence, climactic action, and a clear resolution. But Guattari's oblique reading of the film (which runs counter to Malick's own explanation of the film and its characters) teases out the "minoritarian" becoming initiated by the film's use of a-signifying part-signs that short-circuit the logic of the Lacanian signifier that echoes throughout the history of film studies. Guattari rejects the Lacanian psychoanalytic model and also its influence on semiotics, proposing that "'the Lacanian signifier prevents us from entering the real world of the machine'" (Genosko, A Critical Introduction 101). Badlands enters the machine "in a great meshwork of productive breaks and flows – an aggregate schizomachine of disparate parts": a toaster, a

chicken, a gun, a tree house, campsite, and rifle that compose the schizophrenic journey of Kit (Martin Sheen) and Holly (Sissy Spacek).

Genosko's timely return to Guattari's minor cinema sheds important light on Guattari's ideas about semiotics. Genosko writes:

> [t]he directness between semiotic and material fluxes (intense and multiple) is not diverted into a sphere of representation or signification (psychical quasi-objects like the Sausserian sign consisting of sound image and concept) that results in their mutual cancellation, which is how Guattari characterizes the condition of the subject in both structuralism and psychoanalysis; instead, the a-signifying particles, the most deterritorialized types of signs (not fully formed but part-signs), provide lines of escape from the snares of representation, and they 'work' things prior to representation (A Critical Introduction, 46).

Guattari finds that Badlands is laden with these a-signifying part-signs such as intense blues, bizarre behaviours and border crossings (Genosko, A Critical Inroduction 145). Genosko explains that these part-signs "are not interpretable and centred on the signifier, but are expressive of the unformed signaletic matter of cinematic images, [and they] trigger a becoming minor in those sensitive to their encounter with them" (A Critical Introduction 147). Certainly, many films other than Badlands put signaletic matter, and a-signifying part-signs into motion, but this film is a productive example if we consider how clearly it differs from the previously mentioned examples of minor cinema that Guattari provides, and also how closely the film corresponds to both the thematic concerns and aesthetic composition of Thomas Vinterberg's drama It's All About Love.

Guattari's semiotics enrich an understanding of minor cinema because it allows for a consideration of how a film's visuals or aesthetics, in addition to its thematics, can be read as undeniably political. According to Genosko, Guattari's diverse selection of films demonstrates that "minor cinema is not documented by one genre, but crosses and mixes and confounds its expectations" (A Critical Introduction 156) and that political aesthetics are inseparable from political themes because cinema "'intervenes directly in our relations with the external world' and influences the semiotizations of viewers" (A Critical Introduction, 149).

Rarely do film theorists actually propose extremely detailed ideas for a film, but that is exactly what Guattari does in his Project for a Film by Kafka, a project that crystallizes how Guattari connects minor literature to minor cinema and to real-world politics. Guattari's Project for a Film by Kafka has been, for the most part, left uncatalogued in the discourse on minor cinemas, with the notable exception of the sociologist Gary Genosko. Genosko wrote an introduction to Guattari's proposed film project in which he posits how the concrete example of Guattari's film project can overcome difficulties associated with the production of a minor cinema in largely economic terms. In his Introduction to Félix Guattari's 'Project for a Film by Kafka' Genosko writes that "it has to date been hard enough to think of Guattari as a film theorist, let alone as a filmmaker. Perhaps this fragmentary outline, which is not the only evidence we have, is most important for the role it may play in helping readers of Guattari to overcome existing difficulties, think of minor cinema, and join the Kafka assemblage" (Genosko, Film by Kafka 148). Of importance here is that for Genosko,

minor cinema overruns the limits of cinema itself and joins assemblages with other artistic, social and psychic machines – the Kafka machine for instance. Such a multi-faceted concept of minor cinema stands alone in the discourse on the topic. Other theorists describe, conceptualize, theorize, and apply minor cinema to film-texts, but Guattari's outline expresses his desire to make a minor movie. Guattari's project remains the sole explicit attempt to connect the theory of minor cinema to an active filmmaking practice. The project demonstrates provocative ideas about many aspects of the filmmaking process, and constructs a minor cinema that consists of notes and fragments, a script-in-progress, and exact details about shot types and cinematography. And possibly most interesting when considering minor cinema from an economic standpoint as many theorists do, is Guattari's outline for how the film can be funded and exhibited. As a part of the project, Guattari envisions a television station absorbing much of the initial funding costs, and opens the possibility of the film appearing on television as a "cultural series" (Guattari, Film by Kafka 152). This proposition expands the definition of minor cinema to encompass "made-for-tv" movies, television shows, and mini-series and collaboration with state-sponsored funding sources more generally. The central role that television can play in the exhibition of a minor film moves away from any sort of film puritanism that Deleuze could be accused of in his cinema books as a result of his unabashed auteurism. Guattari's willingness to associate with a medium often defined by brash commercial interests reflects his openness to collaboration with unlikely forces if it secures funds that enable new, larger audiences to connect with the Kafka-machine. In addition to Guattari's innovative plans for funding, he provides a detailed script complete

with notes on cinematography, mise-en-scène, and sound. Guattari lays out a number of scenes all centred around a massive wall that connects a number of vignettes and scenarios. The project rejects a linear plot and instead embraces Kafka's own fragmentary mode of writing, "bringing together people with different points of view and setting out from systems of specific singularities... to contribute in ways that make the themes, and the significations that tend to impose themselves, explode" (Guattari 152). The Project for a Film by Kafka's joint emphasis on the importance of both establishing funding and maintaining creative control, one could argue, resembles Danish director Thomas Vinterberg's ability to secure funds from institutions that are friendly to his artistic preoccupations (such as von Trier's Zentropa studio which is known for financing unorthodox films and the Danish Film Institute's state subsidies for films that embody a perceived cultural value). Guattari's film proposal suggests that filmmakers who collaborate with state or private agencies for funding should not be excluded from a discussion of minor cinema because they can still take these funds and apply them to advance minoritarian political interests. Although Guattari's understanding of political cinema is multifaceted, highly productive and original, it is rarely mentioned in the film studies scholarship on minor cinema, which as I mention below, takes its primary cues from Deleuze and Guattari's collaborations and Deleuze's work on minor cinema in Cinema 2.

A number of contemporary film scholars have extrapolated on Deleuze and Guattari's shared theorization of minor literature, as well as Deleuze's discussion of minor cinema in Cinema 2. These interactions have resulted in a number of diverse approaches

to re-contextualizing the minor amidst and across multiple filmmaking traditions, genres, and disciplines. Despite the three primary characterization of a minor literature that Deleuze and Guattari clearly delineate, the minor resists any sort of stable, totalizing definition. The fairly recent deployment of the minor by a number of authors working both within, outside, and around film studies has resulted in the further stratification of the concept. For example, in their account of minor cinemas, authors Patricia White and David Martin-Jones closely apply the three characteristics of a minor literature outlined in Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature to very different films.

The first category to be discussed here is the queer and gendered minor cinema. This deployment of minor cinema has been applied to queer and/or women filmmakers whose films re-work male-centred and heteronormative dominant cinema in a minor way as an expression of a specifically gendered and/or queer subjectivity. Though the texts on a gendered or queer minor cinema do not cite Guattari's individual writings, they are certainly indebted to Guattari's political ideas and actions. In Molecular Revolution in Brazil, Guattari often comments on and enters dialogue with political groups, unions and workers in order to discuss the political role of homosexuality in shaping Brazil in the process of democratization[9]. Also, in an interview published in Soft Subversions, Guattari touches on the nuanced and conflicted relationship between homosexuality and minor literature (146).[10]

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[9] See the chapter entitled "Politics" in Molecular Revolution in Brazil (Guattari, Félix and Suely Rolnik. Molecular Revolution in Brazil. Trans. Karel Clapshow and Brian Holmes. Cambridge and London: Semiotext(e), 2007.)

[10] Despite Guattari's overt engagement with queer political struggles throughout his life, his writings do not focus on specifically queer films. Deleuze and Guattari often theorize flows of capital and its relationship to the nation state with more vigour than queer or gendered issues, and as discussed later in this chapter these transnational concerns have translated into a number of articles on transnational minor cinema.

Patricia White discusses the works of lesbian filmmakers, including Chantal Akerman and Sadie Benning among others in her article "Lesbian Minor Cinema." White explains how the films by Akerman and Benning qualify each of the three minor characteristics outlined in Kafka. Firstly, White addresses deterritorialization in terms of queer sexuality. She writes that Deleuze and Guattari's definition of the minor "resonates with 'queer,' another term that inflects rather than opposes the dominant, one that 'deterritorializes' sexuality and expression" (411). Many of Akerman's films are rather ambiguously queer, especially in comparison to some of Sadie Benning's films, but White still detects deterritorialization in Akerman's use of exilic themes (412). Following Deleuze and Guattari, White then connects the personal to a political immediacy. Specifically, White focuses on the "direct address, personal narration and physical presence of the artist" in Sadie Benning's Me and Rubyfruit (1989) and It Wasn't Love (1990) (419). The personal address, narration and presence does more than connect to the political, fulfilling Delezue and Guattari's third characteristic. White argues that the personal also connects to the collective: "For each filmmaker, reworking her own past (films) produces a new relationship between the filmmaker and the protagonist that addresses the viewer not as a member of a niche market, but as part of a network or collectivity" (425). Lesbian Minor Cinema's ability to effectively group films that employ divergent aesthetic strategies, and emerge from different genres or filmmaking traditions is pertinent to the later discussion of the films by Lars von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg. The films by these auteurs also display assorted traits, and like the films that White discusses, they share a collective cultural-political sensibility and a minor position

in relation to Hollywood cinema.[11] The group of films discussed in "Lesbian Minor Cinema" also span continents and historical periods, and their minor politics open a space for transnational considerations.

David Martin-Jones also engages with queer cinema and Deleuze in his essay "Demystifying Deleuze: French Philosophy meets Contemporary U.S. Drama." Martin-Jones considers The Doom Generation (Gregg Araki, 1992) as a work of minor cinema after differentiating between third cinema and minor cinema. To make this distinction Martin-Jones writes:

> Minor cinema shares third cinema's concern over the manner in which dominant forms of cinema represent political issues, and construct identities. However, the most crucial difference between the two is that minor cinema does not place as much emphasis on an artisanal mode of production as third cinema does. Partly as a consequence of this, the term minor cinema can also be applied to any number of cinemas outside of revolutionary, post-colonial or third world situations ("Demystifying Deleuze," 226)

This argument is quite productive because while it acknowledges the postcolonial roots of minor cinema and thus its shared political awareness, it allows for the recognition of political works that fall outside the otherwise potentially limiting schema of third cinema. Martin-Jones' approach to minor cinema in this essay connects political cinema to both questions of sexuality and nationality – realms of discourse and representation that are inextricably linked to one another. Furthermore, he also argues that aesthetics and politics

[11] White figures queer communities using the terms *collective* and *network* rather than market – terms better suited to the multidirectional flows of information and affect that characterize the dissemination of a film-text through interconnected communities.

are linked in minor cinema. Specifically in reference to The Doom Generation, Martin-Jones argues that the film presents

> stereotypes (sexual, and in the U.S. case, national) in quotation marks, asking us to reconsider their normal and normative uses. This unusual rendering of established norms of identity takes place in a film shot as though in stylistic quotation marks (witness its elaborate, expressionistic *mise-en-scène*, etc), thereby doubly questioning the dominant norms of identity representation in Hollywood cinema" ("Demystifying Deleuze," 231).

As I touch upon later in the thesis, such stylistic quotation marks closely resemble the type of political aesthetics found in New Danish minor cinema, for example It's All About Love's attempt to put certain Hollywood tropes and archetypes in quotation marks in order for them to be engaged with critically instead of *consumed passively* by an audience.

In his article on a 1998 Scottish film directed by Peter Mullan, *Orphans*, a Work of Minor Cinema from Post-Devolutionary Scotland, Martin-Jones examines Orphans' minoritarian position in relation to British national identity and documentary realism. Like Patricia White, Martin-Jones based his account on the three characteristics of a minor literature which Deleuze and Guattari delineate in Kafka, but he also expands on these criteria to address issues of nationality inspired by Deleuze's discussion of postcolonial filmmakers in Cinema 2. At the outset of the article, Martin-Jones connects aesthetic reappropriation to changing conceptions of the nation. He writes: "I hope to show that [Orphan's] aesthetic renegotiation of social realism (an aesthetic derived from

the British documentary realist tradition) reflects the current renegotiation of identity in which both Scotland, and the Scottish film industry are involved" (Orphans 226). Although Martin-Jones only focuses on the film Orphans in the aforementioned article, he discusses an array of films and their relationship to the nation through a Deleuzian perspective in his book Deleuze, Cinema, and National Identity. The book notes the growing currency of Deleuzian thought within film studies and then goes on to address minor cinema in terms of national narratives (Martin-Jones, National Identity 6, 36). Martin-Jones' work on minor cinema is closely modelled on Deleuze and Guattari's conception of minor literature, yet also expands on the ideas found in Kafka in order to develop the relationships between minor films and national cinemas.

Other authors such as David Rodowick, Bill Marshall, Dudley Andrew and Mette Hjort have also discussed minor cinema in relation to the nation, though with different foci than Martin-Jones. Rodowick devotes a chapter to minor cinema in his book Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine. The chapter "Series and Fabulation: Minor Cinema" reorganizes and reapplies concepts scattered throughout the Deleuze and Guattari canon to build on the established characteristics of minor cinema. Rodowick discusses narrative, temporality, and subjectivity-formation in relation to minor cinema because, as Rodowick explains in the course of the chapter, minor uses of narration (or language) can posit a people yet to come. Rodowick picks up on Deleuze's analysis of Ousmane Sembene as a minor filmmaker and discusses his early film Borom Sarret (1966) as a work of minor cinema because it posits a people who do not yet exist. Rodowick analyzes the film's use of storytelling or "fabulation" as a mode of minor enunciation. He writes:

> Through a form of enunciation that Deleuze calls *fabulation*, series express a becoming-other appropriate to the intervention of a people who are 'not yet' but who may find a means of collective enunciation as a line of variation in the dominant cinematic discourse. This is a minor cinema analagous to the concept of a minor literature created by Deleuze and Guattari in their short book on Kafka (83).

For Rodowick, minor cinema is constituted through its capacity to provoke a becoming-other as a result of a unique and differentiated, yet collective enunciation. The processes that contribute to Rodowick's understanding of minor cinema are indeed analagous to Deleuze and Guattari's minor literature, but Rodowick also goes beyond these original parameters. "Series and Fabulation: Minor Cinema" connects the original concept of minor literature in Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature to Deleuze's discussion of fabulation and Sembene in Cinema 2: The Time-Image, to the concept of becoming in A Thousand Plateaus and also to the analysis of time and history in Difference and Repetition. These connections open up a more comprehensive understanding of minor cinema that takes into account Deleuze and Guattari's greater field of interrelated ideas, such as national identity. Rodowick emphasizes that "minority discourse cannot not be based on an identity politics. By addressing a (minority) people already assumed to exist, identity politics falls prey to a schema of reversal that reifies or essentializes the subaltern subject" (153). Rodowick makes it clear that minor cinema posits future peoples through a collective enunciation that recognizes, yet challenges the hegemony of molar identities often yoked to the nation-state.

In his essay "The Roots of the Nomadic: Gilles Deleuze and the Cinema of West Africa," Dudley Andrew builds on Rodowick's conception of minor cinema in relation to national identity, once again, in the context of West African cinema. Andrew explains the stakes involved in Rodowick's claims about fabulation in relation to identity politics. Andrew writes that

> D.N. Rodowick has fastened on African 'fabulation' to dissolve identity altogether. His task is delicate, for he applauds films that shatter identity into fragments that can recombine in a movement of 'becoming-other' while he simultaneously ratifies the political goal of African filmmakers to provide an image that will summon a people into existence as identity 'becoming-other.' This double action of *shattering* while *summoning* identity liberates the force of cohesion that lies behind what was once termed 'subjectivity' and 'nation' (242).

In the above quotation, Andrew highlights how the griot tradition of fabulation shatters the homogeneity of national identity in favour of a multiplicity of revolutionary subjectivities. Like Rodowick, Andrew picks up on the importance of the oral storytelling tradition of West African griot tradition in Deleuze, especially in order to explicate the molecular political charge of minor "nomadic" cinema from West Africa. Andrew cites Walter Benjamin who contrasts the "common heritage" and "public ethos" of the storyteller, (a figure that Andrew uses comparatively with the griot) with the privacy of the novelist (237). In doing so, Andrew, like other theorists who employ the term minor cinema, foregrounds the importance of peoples to the political project of minor cinema. Once again, Andrew's attention to publics and peoples reinforces the connection between

minor cinema's renegotiation (or even possibly negation) of national identity and the summoning of a people to come.

Bill Marshall also discusses fabulation at length, especially in relation to Pierre Perrault, in his book Quebec National Cinema. Marshall draws on Deleuze's analysis of Perrault in Cinema 2 and argues that fabulation is "future-directed and quite different from the unearthing of the myths of a *past* people" (Marshall, Quebec 29). In "Cinemas of Minor Frenchness" Marshall extends his discussion to identity politics and queer subjectivities in Quebec cinema. Marshall demonstrates how gay themes in film can undermine the Oedipal narrative preoccupations that predominate Quebecois national cinema. Part of what makes queer subjectivity also a minor subjectivity for Marshall, is its ability to destabilize homogenized, dominant conceptions of national identity in Quebec. "The lessons for Quebec are that any national struggle must be predicated on provisional and not full or unified notions of identity" (Marhsall, "Minor Frenchness" 92). Marshall's insistence on a destabilized identity reinforces Rodowick's argument that "minority discourse cannot not be based on an identity politics" (153). For Marshall, when it comes to escaping the binary of identity politics, "the way forward is through fabulation" (Marshall, "Minor Frenchness" 92). Fabulation plays an important role for both Marshall and Rodowick, because it allows for political cinema to form a people to come based on provisional identities rather than recovering outmoded forms of identity that generate reactionary politics[12].

In the article "Hollywood's Indigenous Other," Jane Mills also discusses the

[12] Fabulation is a term that Deleuze borrows from the French philosopher Henri Bergson. Also see Janelle Blankenship, "Preface", Polygraph 14. 3-15

concept of minor cinema (amongst others) in relation to indigenous cinema – mostly in the context of Australian Aboriginal cinema. Mills attempts to problematize the suitability and usefulness of minor cinema to the theorization of indigenous cinema. One of her main arguments against minor cinema is that it is a "Hollywood-centred" model. She writes: "[Minor cinema] offers not a de-centred model that might rescue First Nation cinema from the margins, but a re-centred model in which the minor cinema's cultural and political significance exists only in terms of it being 'not-Hollywood'" (Mills). Mills' argument conflates minor and marginal – a distinction that both Deleuze and Guattari take pains to keep distinct – and also ignores how much of the contemporary discourse on the topic is actually not centred around Hollywood, but other film cultures that could be considered minor in their own right. Examples include Scottish cinema as minor in relation to British cinema, Catalan cinema in relation to Spanish cinema, and queer and women's cinema in relation to cinemas that embody heterosexual and patriarchal values. There is a multiplicity of minor cinemas, not the universal division between a monolithic minor cinema and the static domination of world cinema by the Hollywood model that Mills lays out. Of all of the literature on minor cinema, only the Kafka book appears in the article's works cited, so her article fails to take into account the broader discourse and all of its complexities that are impossible to gauge from solely reading Deleuze and Guattari's primary text on the topic of minor literature (and not cinema).

Mills' second main critique of minor cinema is that Deleuze and Guattari's insistence that minor cinema anticipates a 'people yet to come' is counterproductive to indigenous political claims. According to Mills the suggestion "that the populace of First

Nations have 'not yet' become a people, or are no longer one, is simply untrue" (Mills). Mills' understanding of Deleuze's 'people yet to come' is quite rudimentary and limits its potential productivity in the area of indigenous cinema. Surely, Deleuze would not argue that indigenous populations are not yet a people, but rather that in order to assume the revolutionary posture required to achieve their varied political goals, it is necessary to embrace new political, demographic and artistic formations. An indigenous revolutionary cinema can provoke new politicized formations amongst indigenous populations that still retain certain *traditional* cultural values while finding new ways to re-articulate vital indigenous interests and form a molecular praxis around these heterogeneous interests amidst the mechanisms of control and repression induced by Integrated World Capitalism[13]. It is important to recognize the risk that minor cinema could occlude other forms of indigenous knowledge, theory and praxis, but minor cinema should not be rejected outright and prevented from being productively conjoined with other forms of indigenous knowledge that could create a new understanding of indigenous political praxis as expressed through (a potentially minor) cinema. Many examples of indigenous cinema would also constitute what Leonard Koos has termed "films without borders" because pan-indigenous struggle crosses and defies the borders constructed by nation-states.

Leonard Koos' "Films without Borders: An Introduction" productively juxtaposes

[13] IWC is the term Guattari uses to acknowledge how capitalism is integrated on a global scale and is prevalent even in nation-states of "really existing socialism". See the sub-chapter "Integrated World Capitalism" in the book that Guattari co-wrote with Toni Negri Communists Like Us. In many ways, IWC anticipates the term Empire that Hardt and Negri use to describe the political conditions of globalized capitalism around the turn of the millennium in their book Empire and the world-views and political sentiments embodies by these terms are highly compatible, and even coalesce through Negri's influence in the development of both of them.

minor cinema to other understandings of transnational cinema in circulation such as Homi Bhabha's "interstitial" cinema. Koos is largely concerned with 'minority' filmmakers whose transnational connections challenge notions of national culture through a questioning of borders. Koos specifically invokes minor cinema in a discussion of *beur* films about the struggles of North African immigrants living in the banlieues of France. In his analysis of these films, Koos writes:

> Neither rejecting nor fully participating in a local politics of identity, these transcultural filmmakers and cinemas explore and exploit the tension between 'national' and 'other' cultures, creating films whose fundamental presuppositions are plurality and multiplicity. As borders are erased and redrawn, as globalization intensifies, and as peoples and cultures become increasingly mobile, the transcultural in contemporary cinema will prove to be neither a transitory nor a transitional phenomenon, but a running commentary on a world of borderless possibilities (3).

Indeed, many examples of minor cinema engage in the transnational processes that Koos describes, especially because these processes often involve tensions between major and minor cultures. However, we should also consider that a film that promotes either imaginary or real border crossings is not necessarily minor and can even engage in the worst sort of reactionary pleas to a pure nationhood or religious observance. Koos mentions Le Grand Voyage (Ismaël Ferroukhi, 2004) as an example of a film that illustrates "the transnational and transcultural realities of existence in an era of globalization", and also "challenges and rewrites the idea of the institution of film as an

element bound by the parameters of national culture" (Koos). Though many examples of committed political cinema in the age of Integrated World Capitalism also express these transnational perspectives, I would argue that Le Grand Voyage reterritorializes onto an Oedipal schema saturated in the worst kind of religious fervour. To briefly support this claim, it is worth sketching how the film operates ideologically, and how a film of this sort – though it may seem somewhat progressive on the surface due to its multicultural feel – is actually antagonistic to the political sensibility of minor cinema. Le Grand Voyage is a road movie about a father and his young adult son living in France who decide to make a pilgrimage to Mecca. There are a number of tensions between the father and son along the way, as the father is a devout Muslim and the son is not very interested in his father's religious way of life. The father is married to a Muslim woman, the son is dating a white woman; the son drinks alcohol, the father abstains; the father wants to help an old woman hitchhiking, the son refuses, etc. They eventually make it to Mecca where the father dies after yet another argument with his son, and the son breaks down in tears over his father's death and his own failure to understand the significance of his father's pilgrimage. The film ends with the son assuming guilt over the father's death and incorporating his father's religious faith into his 'modern' and 'moderate' French livelihood. Although the film takes place in a number of countries and depicts border crossings, in turn questioning certain notions of nationalism, it also reterritorializes onto the patriarchal logic of 'father knows best,' even if father happens to espouse and adhere to repressive family relations and restrictive sexual mores. While Le Grand Voyage is interesting to study from the point of transnational, intercultural, or interstitial cinema

that challenges 'notions of national culture,' such a film is also antagonistic to the spirit of minor cinema and revolutionary force of desire in Deleuze and Guattari's schizo-ontology.

In a brief two paragraphs in Hamid Naficy's book An Accented Cinema, Naficy considers the relationship between what he terms an 'accented' style and minor cinema. Naficy explains that "[t]he accented film style is such a gesture, smile, or sneer of refusal and defiance. Although it does not conform to classic Hollywood style, the national cinema style of any particular country, the style of any specific film movement or any film author, the accented style is influenced by them all, and it signifies upon them and criticizes them" (26). For Naficy, accented cinema is explicitly political in its consideration of transnational identities and politics "but this should not be constructed to mean that the accented cinema is an oppositional cinema, in the sense of defining itself primarily against an unaccented dominant cinema" (26). Accented cinema confounds any conformist/oppositional binary, and is more of a broad-based style of defiance against dominant cinema culture than a coherent *movement* per se. Nevertheless, Hamid Naficy writes: "[A]ccented cinema is not only a minority cinema but also a minor cinema in the way that Deleuze and Guattari have defined the concept" because of the infusion of politics from inception to reception (26). Naficy insists that accented cinema is inherently politicized and therein coalesces with minor cinema in a shared resistance to dominant cinema through a multiplicity of approaches that are context specific. Despite these convergences, I would argue that accented and minor cinemas seem to have their own specific politics, and another consideration of Le Grand Voyage in this regard

demonstrates how the two theories don't exactly coincide. Le Grand Voyage raises some issues in the compatibility between these two politicized cinemas, as it could possibly be considered an accented film, but does not meet the political criteria of minor cinema. Though the film is certainly political in the sense that it rejects tenets of dominant cinema through its renegotiation of the road movie genre, it valourizes religious-political institutions that seek just as problematic a form of dominance. Many of the exile, ethnic and diasporic films that Naficy finds accented are certainly works of minor cinema, but others are surely not if they happen to reterritorialize onto reactionary political formations as in the case of Le Grand Voyage. It all depends on the degree of a given film's politicization.

In another book-length study of intercultural cinema entitled Skin of the Film, Laura U. Marks returns to Deleuze's Bergsonian philosophy of cinema expressed in the Cinema books, with a brief nod to the theory of minor cinema. Her interest lies in analyzing intercultural cinema to "bring out the political implications of Deleuze's theory of cinema" (Marks 26). Marks also argues that intercultural cinema "undercuts some of the suppositions about nationalism" (Marks 9) and effectively demonstrates how corresponding "cultural memories return to destabilize national histories" (Marks 27). Marks use of the term intercultural as opposed to transnational recognizes how the term culture is only tenuously linked to institutionally-bound terms nation or 'national culture'.

Marks' use of the term intercultural can also be understood as a 'transnationalism from below'. Unlike 'transnationalism from above' or what is commonly affiliated with the detrimental hegemonic rule of global capital, 'transnationalism from below' is "the

sum of the counterhegemonic operations of the nonelite who refuse assimilation to one given nation-state, including 'everyday practices of ordinary people' (Lionnet and Shih, "Introduction" 6). The 'transnationalism from below' laid out in Lionnet and Shih's anthology Minor Transnationalism is a minor strategy that moves away from a purely vertical or dyadic model of major/minor, above/below in its embrace of horizontal, minor movements and multiplicities from below. In her discussion of ethnic woman filmmakers whose films feature transnational situations, Kathleen McHugh also reiterates the essentially political force of a minor transnationalism or a transnationalism from below. She argues that the films History and Memory (Rea Tajiri 1992) and Crucero (Guillermo Verdecchia and Ramiro Puerta 1994):

> exploit the pleasure of narrative, of humour, of identification, while also emphasizing that 'becoming minor' is not a question of essence (as the stereotypes of minorities in dominant ideology would want us to believe) but a question of position: a subject position that in the final analysis can only be defined in 'political' terms – that is, in terms of the effects of economic exploitation, political disenfranchisement, social manipulation, and ideological domination on the cultural formation of minority subjects and discourses (McHugh, "Minor Pasts" 172).

McHugh's statement accurately reflects that becoming minor (and also minor cinema) is fundamentally political and fluid; not linked to an essentialist understanding of power relations or a restrictive notion of identity, but rather produced through a minor political positioning. Though McHugh reads becoming minor in an ethnic minority context,

minority ethnicities by no means have a monopoly on becoming-minor, as it is about political consciousness and praxis rather than deterministic features such as race. In another one of her essays entitled "The World and the Soup: Historicizing Media Feminisms in Transnational Contexts" McHugh discusses film feminism as a political praxis that cuts across borders, and in the context of cinema, confounds the clear distinctions between First, Second, Third cinema. McHugh's focus here is highly relevant as it demonstrates how a horizontal movement engaged in the praxis of transnationalism from below can take form across media feminisms that problematizes traditional segmented and hierarchical modes of knowledge and categorization. Marks, Naficy and McHugh all theorize minor cinema in relation to certain notions of cultural, ethnic or gendered identity but also recognize the hybridity and multiplicity inherent in their discussions of identity, highlighting the capacity for shifts, changes and mutations in identity as economic and cultural changes take place within, throughout and beyond the nation-state.

The resistance to identity politics in essays by many of the above-mentioned critics can be linked to Deleuze and Guattari's thorough commitment to becoming rather than being. A cinema harnessed to a stable molar identity could engage in minority politics without being minor in the spirit of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy. The resistance to stable identity politics expressed by Marshall and Rodowick in particular, might contradict some other critics' approaches to establishing a canon of minor cinema. Patricia White's article "Lesbian Minor Cinema," for example, connotes an implied identity politics around the label of *lesbian*, yet White circumvents the potential criticism

of relying on an identity politics by linking identity to collective experience rather than an essentialist, Oedipalized notion of identity that dictates behaviour – hence her emphasis on network and collectivity, as opposed to niche market (White 425). Even though Alison Butler argues that women's cinema (possibly a molar, umbrella term) constitutes a minor cinema she also circumvents a reliance on molar identity politics by similarly connecting identity to shared group experiences (Butler 21).

The peoples and publics that make up nationality also play a central role in Mette Hjort's work on New Danish Cinema as a minor national cinema. Hjort takes a different approach to minor cinema than other film historians and theorists who have written on the topic. Unlike Patricia White, Alison Butler and Bill Marshall who discuss gendered and queer identities, Hjort approaches identity on a national scale. Furthermore, unlike the other authors who discuss minor cinema in terms of the nation such as David Martin-Jones, David Rodowick, Dudley Andrew, and also Bill Marshall, Hjort rarely cites Deleuze and Guattari's primary texts with the frequency or strict adherence of these other authors who use specific film examples to illuminate and elucidate the minor. These authors posit the nation in terms of subaltern peoples whose becoming-other can splinter national identity, in order for it then to be reformed, renegotiated, or rendered irrelevant amidst the creation of new molecular formations that do not adhere to the national identity which inherently insists on its own stability. Alternatively, Hjort's deployment of the term minor cinema refers to small nations and their accompanying small national cinemas within a global community of nations dominated by major cinemas (ie. Hollywood) (Hjort, Small Nation ix). More importantly, Hjort conceives of minor cinema

on a globalized scale where, for example, Denmark's "minor" cinema is always tied to a major cinema like Hollywood through transnational flows of capital and spectators (Hjort, Small Nation 2). Hjort's attention to the unequal power relations amongst national cultures and their respective cinemas makes her work especially pertinent to the discussion of the films in this thesis, in particular It's All About Love, and its minor use of the globalized world's dominant cinema.

In another European 'small cinema' context, the Swedish film historians Lars Gustaf Andersson and John Sundholm also use the term minor cinema to theorize instances of amateur and avant-garde cinema in 1950s Sweden, in an article entitled "Amateur and avant-garde: minor cinemas and public sphere in 1950s Sweden." The primary focus of their study is the German-Jewish author, dramatist, filmmaker and painter who lived in exile in Sweden, Peter Weiss.[14] The article lends further support to Hjort's argument that one should understand small nations and their accompanying cinemas as potentially minor cinemas. Andersson and Sundholm also link the aesthetics of avant-garde filmmaker Peter Weiss to a notion of minor cinema, joining a minor nation status to a minor aesthetics that challenges the illusionist and commercial filmmaking industry, even within a small nation like Sweden. Following David E. James, Andersson and Sundholmn also link minor cinema to a transient, momentary nature in order to historicize how and why a group of films express a minoritarian politics (Andersson and Sundholm 210). By connecting aesthetics, history and nation in their article, the authors put forward a multifaceted understanding of minor cinema that takes into consideration

[14] Interestingly, Peter Weiss (1910-1982), like Deleuze and Guattari, was inspired by Franz Kafka's modernist writing. Many of his German-language novels and plays were written in a minimalist and estranged style (much in the spirit of a 'minor literature').

real-world politics that shape the given situation's minor cinema.

Small nation and experimental aesthetics also converge in Anton Pujol's essay "The Cinema of Ventura Pons: Theatricality as a Minoritarian Device." Pujol argues that the Catalan director Pons uses theatricality as a minoritarian device in order to "disarticulate conceptions and unsettle expectations" (Pujol 173). Here, the use of radical aesthetics to self-reflexively represent the adaptation process of his films provokes thinking about Catalan cinema and language more generally. These examples parallel the situation of Danish cinema and Lars von Trier. Like Catalan and Swedish cinema, Danish cinema is heavily reliant on state subsidies, yet like Pons the "one man film industry" von Trier has also managed to make films that distance themselves from any traces of state sponsorship and the conservative ideology that could be spawned by such close ties to the bureaucratic systems of state-sponsored cinema.

Finally, this survey of approaches to "minor cinema" has to take into consideration recent studies that have emerged on both mainstream and experimental American film. The work of David E. James is one of many important reminders that America cannot be conceived of as a unified whole with a singular film culture. In The Most Typical Avant-Garde: History and Geography of Minor Cinemas in Los Angeles James traces minor film practices in Los Angeles, a city whose film production is most often associated with Hollywood cinema. The book examines the rich history of avant-garde filmmaking in Los Angeles and argues that the avant-garde tradition of the city displays a diverse range of oppositional voices and perspectives to the dominance of Hollywood cinema, or in other words, "attempts to oppose or escape the imperatives of

capitalist culture" (James 19). James also writes: "Minority practices are inevitably framed by the dominant industry and determined by its overall structure" (15). By keeping in mind 'minor perspectives' that emerge from spaces that coexist with Hollywood, it remains clear that the possibility for minor becomings does not depend on adherence to a specific (small) national identity that opposes Hollywood's cultural dominance on a global scale. Rather, minoritarian utterances can emerge from a space commonly seen as a mainstream cultural industry, such as in the case of Los Angeles.

James' study of minor cinema practices in Los Angeles further problematizes any understanding of a national culture as actually emblematic of the whole of a nation. Yet James, like Hjort, unlike many other authors, and possibly even Deleuze and Guattari, still champions the existence of "minor institutions." James' chapter entitled "Minor Cinemas: Institutions of the Avant-Garde" focuses on institutions such as university film programs in L.A. that provide filmmakers with the ability to express viewpoints antithetical to those of Hollywood, and also the independent theatres that screen such films. Like Hjort, James expands on Deleuze and Guattari's original conceptions of the minor in order to conceive of "minor institutions" as either universities, movie theatres or in Hjort's case, financial institutions of national film cultures that are linked to nation-state subsidies. James' deployment of the term minor cinema further multiplies its use-value in part because he diverges from Deleuze and Guattari's primary texts on the subject. In regards to the three characteristics of a minor literature delineated in Kafka, James comments that "[t]hough these characteristics are immediately applicable to many of the film practices discussed here, my usage of the term does not appropriate them as

restrictive criteria (their reference to Kafka is, in any case, questionable)" (446).

Instead of closely following Deleuze and Guattari's characteristics of minor literature, David E. James' approach to minor cinema is written in the spirit of Tom Gunning's essay Towards a Minor Cinema. The early film historian Gunning first picked up on the term minor cinema to describe the tendency of "a specific group of young filmmakers in the late 1980s who were supposedly responding to the monumentiality of Stan Brakhage's work and the exhaustion of a putative 'International Style' in the avant-garde comprising structural film and new forms of narrativity" (James 446). These filmmakers (Fonoroff, Herwitz, Ahwesh, Lapore, Klahr, and Solomon) decisively counter mainstream filmmaking and as Gunning points out, they "consciously maintain a position outside the major cinematic languages even when – especially when – they make reference to them" (Gunning 3). Gunning maintains that minor films are conscious of their minor place amidst flows of majoritarian cultural production. "Minor cinema recognizes – cannot ignore – the existence of another cinema" (Gunning 3). To use Gunning's terminology, the "parasitic" images of these experimental films demarcate their distance from mainstream film culture while simultaneously referencing dominant filmmaking practice in order to maintain their minor position in relation to it.

Gunning focuses on obscure, or minor artists within the already minor practice of experimental or avant-garde filmmaking. Taking quite a different approach, in "Andy Warhol's 'Minor Cinema'" Svein Inge Sather considers Andy Warhol – arguably the most popular of all American avant-garde filmmakers and artists – as a minor filmmaker. Sather finds Warhol's filmmaking to be an example of minor cinema because his work is

in many ways unclassifiable and free from the constraints and categorizations of Hollywood, as well as the artistic conformity that arises amidst components of the avant-garde. Although Sather links Warhol's penchant for crafting films of anti-memory to a notion of "becoming-film," I would argue that his consideration of Warhol as a minor filmmaker seems to negate the centrality of political commitment to the concept of minor cinema as conceived by both Deleuze and Guattari throughout their works. Warhol infamously rejected any sort of political affiliations and was instead drawn to the phenomenon of 20th century stardom – an interest that led him to meet, photograph and arguably, sympathetically represent the most majoritarian of figures such as Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan. Certainly, a number of different perspectives on minor cinema have emerged in film studies, and the conditions of what constitutes a work of minor cinema is always changing in relation to majoritarian cinema, literature, and entertainment. Regardless, in order to stay true to the spirit of Deleuze, and especially Guattari's conception of the minor, I would argue that it is necessary to continuously insist on the primacy of the political in whatever shapes that may take, and therefore to question the categorization of Andy Warhol as a truly minor figure given his staunch apoliticism.

Another approach on American cinema more effectively demonstrates how aesthetics and politics are linked in studies of minor cinema. Hervé Aubron's article "Minor Movies" in Cahiers du Cinéma invokes the political obliquely through a discussion of a group of American films that appeared at the Cannes film festival in 2007, such as Zodiac (David Fincher, 2007) Death Proof (Quentin Tarantino, 2007), and No

Country for Old Men (Joel and Ethan Cohen, 2007). Unlike Gunning and James who focus on the minor movements within minor avant-garde *genres*, Aubron's collection of minor movies are by well-known auteurs who share a somewhat ambivalent relationship to Hollywood. On the one hand, these directors depend on studio financing and they construct films through the use of popular stars and genres. On the other hand, these directors are known for their unique styles and sensibilities that have been praised by critics and audiences alike for re-working Hollywood tropes. Of most pressing importance, however, is how these films tie into a minoritarian politics of nationhood or transnationality. In expounding how Deleuze and Guattari's Kafka book relates to the films at hand Aubron asks "where does America stand?," "where do we stand in relation to it?," and "have we finished with it or has it just changed its form?" (Aubron 76). Aubron goes on to also raise the question: "Are Tarantino, Fincher, Shyamalan and their consorts a minority in Hollywood? That is not the problem; they are not minor in that manner. They do offer a glimpse of something very important: America is becoming characterized; it no longer represents a universal land or code (and 9/11 was the turning point for that)" (78). Clearly, for Aubron, the importance of these filmmakers' minor status is less about being minor in relation to Hollywood, but minor in re-imagining America and its relationship to the rest of the world through "quintessentially American" film styles (ie. grindhouse movies and detective stories). In doing so:

> The characterization and the landing of American cinema: the *minor* movies movement suddenly hits on a related question, that of mannerism. Molded by reference, these films nonetheless no longer reduce themselves to local scale,

> whereas the mannerism of the years 1980-1990 tended precisely to display itself, didn't localize but globalized cinema to America, America to the world, the world to the universe. It dreamt of infinite expansion, in which the slightest detail, inflated with helium, would be great enough to contain every possible metaphor. Minor cinema believes rather in compression and microscopic branches. The inversion of scales and measures and the feeling of characterization don't have small consequences on the physiology of minor movies and make for unsettling echoes resonating between each other, but also between them and Kafka (Aubron 78).

All of the directors that Aubron mentions have made 'major' films in the past (according to Aubron himself), yet they manage to reverse the scale in these films in order to particularize the universal as opposed to universalizing the particular. Aubron's thinking of minor cinema in terms of scale allows for a consideration of particularities that these films raise about America, it's cinema, and its relationship to the rest of the world in all of its many particularities and idiosyncrasies. The proximity between the directors that Aubron mentions (the Cohens, Tarantino, Fincher) and the ideological investments in Hollywood is highly relevant to my discussion of New Danish Cinema directors that 'do Hollywood.' The films examined in the thesis invoke both the American nation-state and some of its dominant cinema's tropes in order to play them in a minor key.

In conclusion, this chapter has traced how a number of critics have drawn upon Deleuze and Guattari's theory of a minor cinema to productively read new and diverse film cultures. Minor cinema has proven to be quite a malleable theory, as evidenced by

the wide range of films that these authors have addressed and argued as constitutive of minor cinema. A complete engagement with the aforementioned work on minor cinema is beyond the scope of this thesis. This cursory analysis of the film studies scholarship on minor cinema aims to introduce some of the major issues that will recur throughout the rest of the thesis. This chapter does highlight contradictions that arise in some critics' interpretations of minor cinema. Some authors base their arguments on identity politics, while others on the force of fabulation to undo such identity formations. Some authors stress minor cinema's proximity to, and occasional overlap with mainstream, or dominant cinema and others situate minor cinema as necessarily outside Hollywood. Some authors conceive of small national cinemas as minor cinemas and others argue that peoples capable of becoming-other undercut national identity and formations of the nation-state. All of these authors draw on the work of Deleuze and Guattari (some more faithfully than others), as does this thesis. Despite some of the contradictions within the discourse on minor cinema, there is no need to view it as an impasse to productively pursing the concept, for each work can be made productive in its own way – even if from behind[15].

[15] Deleuze himself espoused approaching authors "from behind" in order to produce new concepts (as one produces a monstrous child). See "Letter to a Harsh Critic" published in Negotiations 1972-1990. 3-12.

Chapter Two: A Minor Take on Hollywood

"How pathetic it is when politics can be conducted only in the name of the nation!"

(Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Commonwealth 163)

The connections between the aforementioned theories of minor cinema and the Danish films It's All About Love, Dogville, Manderlay, and Dear Wendy may not seem readily clear or apparent. The films do not emerge from minority filmmakers like the directors discussed in the articles by White and Butler. Quite the opposite is the case, as Thomas Vinterberg is one of biggest filmmakers in Denmark and has collaborated with Lars von Trier, the most internationally recognized auteur to emerge from Denmark. Unlike the avant-garde films discussed by James and Gunning, It's All About Love, Dogville, Manderlay, and Dear Wendy are still works of narrative cinema and appeal to the market for films by "foreign" and/or "art-house" directors. Unlike films from Quebec and Scotland discussed by Marshall and Martin-Jones, It's All About Love, Dogville, Manderlay, and Dear Wendy do not emerge from a territory of contested national identity.[16] So if these films do not seem to fit into any of the pre-existing theories about minor cinema, then why approach the film through this theoretical lens? A few reasons.

Firstly, minor cinema as it appears in contemporary film studies (in its plurality of forms) is one step removed from the primary sources that first laid the foundation for the scholarly work on the minor. Even though articles on minor cinema such as those by Gunning and Marshall may seem somewhat incompatible, both are rooted in Deleuze and Guattari's original conception of the minor. Such a divergence attests to the adaptability

[16] As I point out below, however, Mette Hjort does consider Danish filmmaking an example of a "small" national cinema which challenges hegemonic film production. See her recent essay, "Small Cinemas: How They Thrive and Why They Matter," Mediascapes: UCLA's Journal of Cinema and Media Studies (Winter 2011).

of Deleuze and Guattari's collaborative philosophy, since the two authors are able to reach antithetical conclusions regarding disparate films, even though they cite the same theoretical texts. These differences also call attention to the multiple ways that Deleuze and Guattari themselves theorize the minor – a plurality that further lends itself to a wide range of interpretations. Even though It's All About Love, Dogville, Manderlay, and Dear Wendy do not fit into a ready-made sub-category of minor cinema such as "lesbian minor cinema" or "Quebec minor cinema," I argue is still possible to bring the concept of minor cinema as it appears in the primary texts of Deleuze and Guattari into productive engagement with the films in a manner that expands on the current film studies scholarship.

Secondly, I would argue that minor cinema is especially relevant to a reading of It's All About Love, Dogville, Manderlay, and Dear Wendy if one considers Danish cinema from the perspective of a "small cinema." Here I am indebted to Mette Hjort, who provocatively uses the concept in her discussion of New Danish Cinema as a minor national cinema. Her book Small Nation, Global Cinema engages with contemporary Danish filmmaking as a whole, in particular focusing on the global impact of the Dogme 95 movement and the films of Thomas Vinterberg and Lars von Trier. Unlike some of the other critics who write on minor cinema, Hjort does not use shared aesthetic or thematic preoccupations to group films together under the banner of Danish New Cinema. Instead, Hjort's categorization is structured around shared production, distribution and exhibition contexts of films that emerge from a small nation. Hjort's discussion of New Danish Cinema as a minor cinema informs (and encourages) my decision to apply the theory of

minor cinema to It's All About Love, Dogville, Manderlay, and Dear Wendy.

This thesis argues first and foremost that Vinterberg's It's All About Love can be read as a work of minor cinema and further asks the reader to conceive of this film as the cutting edge of an assemblage also consisting of a wider cycle of films critiquing nationalist mythology in post-9/11 America. Though all four films (It's All About Love, Dogville, Manderlay, and Dear Wendy) by the Dogme brothers are critical of the United States for a variety of reasons and express these critiques through a number of ways, It's All About Love moves past critiques based on the nation-state model to provide a critical representation of the new political order of globalization known as Empire, also accounting for America's hegemonic position within this order. Although still subversive, I argue that Dogville, Manderlay, and Dear Wendy are somewhat limited in their criticisms because while they pointedly critique American nationalism, they fail to enunciate the revolutionary potential of collective desire that overwhelms nation-state models of political expression and collective groupings. Though the criticisms of American nationalism expressed in these three films is certainly oppositional, such criticisms remain tied to nation-state paradigms and only figure a "people to come" that could define itself vis à vis the United States. Therefore, the criticism expressed in Dogville, Dear Wendy, and Manderlay in some ways miss their mark, because the oppressive forces in today's world are stratified to operate beyond the limits of nation-state sovereignty and state-sanctioned oppression. Of these four films, only It's All About Love represents the stratified and dispersed character of Empire, and is thus the only film capable of imagining a revolutionary collectivity capable of challenging such an order.

That said, however, the importance of the other three films in the "minor" cycle of Danish cinema should not be downplayed, as they contribute to the extra-textual meaning of It's All About Love and in myriad ways work together and compliment one another in a shared political project of dismantling nationalist master narratives in a post-9/11 world.

A Tradition of Opposition

Compared to contemporary Hollywood cinema, the aesthetics of Dogville and Manderlay are radical and unconventional. An innovative use of stylistics should come as no surprise from director Lars von Trier who has continually directed films that employ experimental aesthetics to compliment the radical themes of his films. His breakthrough film, and first of the Europa trilogy, The Element of Crime (1984) incorporates film noir and expressionist aesthetics into a mystery plot about a serial killer who traverses a sepia-toned dystopia. Epidemic (1987) anticipates the some of the stylistic conventions of Dogme 95 in its low-grade, fuzzy film stock and vérité-inspired structure and staging. In Europa (1991), von Trier continued with his stylistic experimentation by alternating the use of black and white photography with colour photography in an attempt to blend the dreaming and waking states of the film's protagonist. The television series The Kingdom (1994) was composed entirely of hand-held shots which later became a central component of Dogme aesthetics. Breaking the Waves (1996) continued von Trier's experimentation with grainy hand-held images and contrasted them with CGI postcard-like inter-titles. The Idiots (1998) is von Trier's only registered Dogme film, though it does in some aspects resemble his earlier work in its use of an impoverished aesthetic.

The Dogme 95 manifesto was a polemically charged statement on aesthetics designed to break free from Hollywood conventions. Despite the militant tone of the statement, von Trier was quick to move away from the self-imposed rules and constraints with his subsequent film Dancer in the Dark (2000). The film maintained a Dogme style and features themes of group psychology and mental illness (which recur throughout von Trier's oeuvre and many prominent Dogme films), yet in open violation of the Dogme rules, the film incorporates genre conventions of the musical (amongst many other "rule violations"). Dogville and Manderlay are also made in the vein of stylistic innovation, but they mark a departure from von Trier's previous films because they bear closer resemblance to Hollywood cinema, in large part due to the use of Hollywood stars and an intensified investment in melodramatic structure.

Since the four films under discussion directly engage with Hollywood, further analysis of the Dogme 95 movement is necessary in order to trace Thomas Vinterberg and Lars von Trier's history of opposition to the world's most dominant filmmaking industry. In the essay "Manifest Destinies: Dogma 95 and the Future of the Film Manifesto," Scott MacKenzie connects the Dogme movement to many larger debates surrounding it, including minor cinema. He writes: "Questions about the relationship between the avant-garde and the popular cinema, the role of 'minor cinemas' and the dominance of Hollywood, and the history and future of art cinema as a means of cultural exchange between national cultures are of relevance to the debates surrounding Dogma" (MacKenzie 48). MacKenzie also references Hjort's use of the term minor cinema to define New Danish cinema's small-nation status in relation to American film output

(Hjort, Small Nation ix). Both authors argue that Dogme 95 originated out of a "minor" Danish national film culture with an oppositional stance to Hollywood's homogenization of global film cultures. Hjort notes that "Lars von Trier clearly suggests that Dogma 95 should be thought of as a polemical response to the phenomenon of Hollywood globalization" (Hjort, "A Small Nation's Response to Globalisation" 38). In reference to the dominance of Hollywood on a world scale, Hjort recognizes the "overpowering effects of major culture" and the European response: "European nations have responded to the cultural imperialism that affects them most directly: that of the United States." (Hjort, "Politics of Recognition" 520). The polemical response of Dogme 95 to the negative effects of globalization and the ever-growing influence of Hollywood cinema over both filmmakers and audiences outside of America, is closely tied to a liberation of small cinemas from Hollywood conventions, and in the case of Dogme 95, the wilful imposition of new restrictions. "Von Trier notes that Dogma is not just about following rules, but about setting limits, and through that process, liberating oneself from another set of rules (the conventionalized practices of Hollywood)" (Hjort and MacKenzie 11). In liberating themselves from Hollywood conventions, The Idiots and The Celebration connect oppositional aesthetics to oppositional politics.

Von Trier and Vinterberg's Dogme films The Idiots and The Celebration are overtly oppositional to Hollywood in look and feel, and bear no resemblance to Hollywood films of the period. A vast difference exists between Dogme films and Hollywood in terms of geography, aesthetics, thematics, politics and economics. Geographically, Dogme emerged out of Denmark and then spread internationally, even to

America. Aesthetically, Dogme films bear little to no resemblance to Hollywood style. Thematically and politically, the manifesto and early Dogme films The Idiots and The Celebration attacked family values, bourgeois privilege and the psychic repression of capitalist society. Economically, the Dogme movement spawned molecular formations through the internet around the democratization of feature filmmaking as evidenced by the 33 licensed Dogme films made between 1998 and 2002, and many others produced after the closure of the official Dogme secretariat (Stevenson, Dogme Uncut 280, 291). Dogme films in no way attempt to mimic the style or themes of Hollywood cinema. The rules of the Dogme manifesto and its stripped-down approach to filmmaking or "vow of chastity" actually prohibit just about all the major characteristics of Hollywood film including use of props and shooting in studio, non-diegetic music, stationary cameras, special effects, superficial action, genre, and director credits (Stevenson, Dogme Uncut 21).

If one considers the oppositional attitude of the Dogme films directed by Thomas Vinterberg and Lars von Trier, one can also draw parallels between minor cinema and Peter Wollen's concept of counter-cinema. Wollen's seminal concept also informs the contemporary discourse on minor cinema and can help to further describe Dogme and distinguish between minor cinema and counter-cinema, and their different takes on oppositional politics. In the chapter of his book on Dogme 95 entitled "John Cassavetes, Jean-Luc Godard, and the Gang That Influenced Dogme," Jack Stevenson links the counter-cultural ethos of the American Underground and the French New Wave to Dogme 95. Stevenson's comparison prompts a closer analysis of the relationship between

Peter Wollen's essay Godard and Counter-Cinema: *Vent d'Est* and theories of minor cinema. At the end of this seminal essay, Wollen argues that counter-cinema only exists in relation to another cinema, and he opens up the possibility that counter-cinema could be closer to the cinema it opposes than it may readily admit. Wollen writes:

> But [Godard] is mistaken if he thinks that such a countercinema can have an absolute existence. It can only exist is relation to the rest of cinema. Its function is to struggle against the fantasies, ideologies, and aesthetic devices of one cinema with its own antagonistic fantasies, ideologies, and aesthetic devices. In some respects this may bring it closer – or seem to bring it closer – to the cinema it opposes than Vent d'Est would suggest (129).

The significance of this quotation in relation to minor cinema lies in how Wollen anticipates that in the post-political, post-modernist era, counter-cinema may more closely resemble the mainstream cinema that it opposes, yet nevertheless remain oppositional. Minor cinema maintains the oppositional politics of counter-cinema, but more as an inflection of major cinema, rather than (in a binary manner) functioning as its negative or antithesis.

I would argue that the differences between the Dogme film The Celebration and Vinterberg's later film It's All About Love seem to exemplify the divergent oppositional strategies that earmark tendencies of counter-cinema and minor cinema. If The Celebration is overtly oppositional, echoing the militantly-toned Dogme manifesto and its corresponding rules for circumventing decadence, cosmetics and conventional dramaturgy, It's All About Love, at least on the surface, seems quite conventional by

Hollywood standards. Yet Vinterberg's later film also shares an oppositional thrust with The Celebration. Whereas The Celebration disregards Hollywood conventions and works according to its own logic, It's All About Love simultaneously functions alongside and within Hollywood's film language – not in an act of mimesis, but in an act of infiltration[17] in order to deterritorialize Hollywood grammar and make it stutter.

Thomas Vinterberg and Lars von Trier do America

The question we will now consider is how the theory of minor cinema applies to post-Dogme films by Vinterberg and von Trier's films about America. Although these films deviate in significant ways from the impoverished aesthetic and "vow of chastity" that determined the earlier Dogme work, I argue that all four films feature a high coefficient of deterritorialization and render the personal political (as we will recall, these are important criteria for a "minor literature," as articulated by Deleuze and Guattari). An interesting point here is that of these four film set in America, It's All About Love most closely resembles mainstream Hollywood films; this proximity to the major language of Hollywood is partly why the film is most successful as a work of minor cinema. Deleuze and Guattari write that "the more a language has or acquires the characteristics of a major language, the more it is affected by continuous variations that transpose it into a 'minor language'" (A Thousand Plateaus 102). And they continue: "'Major and 'minor' do not qualify two different languages but rather two usages or functions of language" (Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus 104). The similarities that It's All About Love shares

[17] In describing minor cinema as an act of infiltration I am indebted to Needeya Islam and her article on Katheryn Bigelow. 91-125 in Kiss Me Deadly: Feminism and Cinema for the Moment.

with majoritarian cinema can actually function to play a major language in a minor key, and remind us that a radically oppositional aesthetic is not necessary in order to constitute minor cinema. Rather, the seemingly conformist aspects of It's All About Love mark its points of infiltration into the Hollywood model. Needeya Islam writes that in minor cinema "the codes and language of the Hollywood model become ineluctable vehicles. The necessity of writing in a dominant language from which one is also excluded does not indicate mere subjugation, however, but a significant degree of infiltration, and thus potency" (Islam 99). This quotation explains how It's All About Love, despite being the least overtly *radical* of the films being discussed, emerges as actually the most politically potent because it operates the vehicle of Hollywood style and structure in a minor key (from within), rather than simply critiquing it using an oppositional mode (from without).

As I already suggested, It's All About Love, Dear Wendy, Dogville, and Manderlay can be described as acts of deterritorialization – the first characteristic of Deleuze and Guattari's minor literature. Since each of these films about America is financed and directed by Europeans, the films deterritorialize cinematic representations of America, reading America from the exiled prism of a European cultural imaginary[18]. A deterritorialized representation of America can also be found in Kafka's novel Amerika, a book he wrote without ever having visited America, much like von Trier. These instances of deterritorialization take place on a meta-textual level, accounting for the geographic location and (national) identity of the cultural producer. In these films, America is not a stable location with set borders, but an imaginary milieu in a process of redefinition

[18] And we can stress the *imaginary* in "cultural imaginary" given that von Trier has never been to the United States.

through cinematic representation. All four films I analyze in this thesis share this deterritorializing of America and this is the primary reason I argue that this cycle of films can be considered together as complimentary works of political cinema. However, it is also important to closely analyze how these films engage in a process of textual (as opposed to a meta-textual) deterritorialization, because It's All About Love, Dear Wendy, Dogville, and Manderlay also visually deterritorialize America as represented via Hollywood style through aesthetic experimentation.

It's All About Love deterritorializes Hollywood film style through infiltration and over-stylization. As mentioned in chapter one, in Islam's theorization of the minor, infiltration is a process wherein a minor work will overlap with certain elements of the mainstream in order to make possible their subsequent deterritorialization. A quick glance at It's All About Love's visuals is not enough to distinguish the film from its Hollywood counterparts. It's All About Love looks quintessentially Hollywood, with the faces of Joaquin Phoenix, Claire Danes and Sean Penn populating the film's dramatic close-up shots in an internally coherent narrative space (unlike the spaces of Dogville and Manderlay, to be discussed momentarily). On the surface, the style of It's All About Love is quintessentially Hollywood. Vinterberg himself emphasized the drastic differences between It's All About Love and his first feature, The Celebration. Vinterberg said, "I spit in the face of Dogme with this movie" (Stevenson, Dogme Uncut 17). Evidently, Vinterberg was searching for a new approach to his political filmmaking that broke with the Dogme tradition, and he found his inspiration in America's quintessential film style. The jury at Cannes even rejected the film from competing, citing its American

appearance. "[The jury] told him they found it too 'American' and were disappointed that he hadn't given them something more in the spirit of The Celebration" (Stevenson, Dogme Uncut 17). If style is an investment as Dana Polan suggests in his introduction to Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature [19] then It's All About Love marks a substantial investment in deterritorializing Hollywood film style.

The images that characterize It's All About Love overlap with Hollywood-style visuals, but they also go a step further. The film's mise-en-scène is actually over-stylized in order to deterritorialize the stylized imagery of Hollywood cinema from its self-naturalizing function. In It's All About Love, the over-stylization de-naturalizes the construction of the mise-en-scène and in doing so, shifts the images from a plane of realist intelligibility grounded in believability and normalcy (established through repetition) to a plane of virtual possibility – a plane where residue of Hollywood style comes into new connections with images of deterritorialization. Some examples of over-stylization include: the purple colour motif that runs through the film and connects John and Elena to one another through similarly coloured costumes, Elena's very heavy make-up, close-ups of John's piercing green eyes, and the opulence of Elena and her family's hotel. These images exemplify how the film's over-stylization effectively deterritorializes the norms of Hollywood through an imaginary construction of America by cultural producers working across Europe and outside of Hollywood. It's All About Love effectively deterritorializes Hollywood film-style and by extension, American nationalism, effectively linking both to the very artifice that colours the film's images.

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[19] In the "Translator's Introduction" to Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature Polan writes: "style is understood to be an energetic and total investment of an author's political being-in-the-world" (Polan xxiii).

Additionally, It's All About Love's deterritorialized film style corresponds to its representations of deterritorialized peoples, power structures, and unexplainable global phenomenon that eventually make way for the film to be read in solidarity with future collectivities (or "people to come"). But first let us look at how Dogville, Manderlay, and Dear Wendy also feature high coefficients of deterritorialization and render the personal political.

A dual tension between Hollywood and avant-garde aesthetics pervades Dogville and Manderlay. The foregrounded plane of these films is populated with star images familiar to Hollywood spectators, yet the blacked/whited out backgrounds of the films counter Hollywood-style realism's insistence on the presence and believability of settings – a believability inextricably tied to Quattrocento perspective as a naturalized mode of perception. Close-ups of star images populate the images of Dogville and Manderlay including the faces of Nicole Kidman, Lauren Bacall, Chlöe Sevigny, Willem Dafoe and Danny Glover. In the background, however, the mise-en-scène is molded out of a barren soundstage with either an all-black or all-white background (depending on the time of day or night). All of the walls, doors, and buildings in the fictional small town of Dogville and the plantation of Manderlay are entirely see-through. The foreground and background of these images emerge from Hollywood and avant-garde traditions respectively and mark the films' dual experimentation with polarized modes of semiotization – signifying signs and a-signifying part-signs.

The split between different types of signs that operate on different planes of the images (foreground/background) is vital to these films' deterritorialization of Hollywood

aesthetics. The foregrounded (star) images and their signifying force is immersed in a background of an even greater – and shocking – a-signifying force that deterritorializes the star image and its connection to commercial cinema that "serves the interests of corporate power, as a vehicle through which docile models of subjectivity are communicated by means of dominant signifying semiologies" (Genosko, A Critical Introduction 146). Genosko argues that a-signifying fragments such as black and white (Genosko, A Critical Introduction 148) provoke the deterritorialization of majoritarian cinema because "the a-signifying particles, the most deterritorialized types of signs (not fully formed but part-signs), provide lines of escape from the snares of representation, and they 'work' things prior to representation" (Genosko, A Critical Introduction 146). Both Dogville and Manderlay's more "impoverished" use of black and white backgrounds work against the rest of the mise-en-scène prior to representation, and prevent the films' images from signifying along the pre-established currents of commercial cinema, and in turn reinforcing transcendent narratives through familiar aesthetics. The a-signifying backgrounds force an inherently politicized re-consideration of the semiotic material contained in the rest of the images including; title-cards indicating a chapter narrative, star images, costumes, American flags, clocks, churches, guns, etc. As a result, these signifying elements of the film which are deeply entrenched in Hollywood cinema are deterritorialized through their displacement onto an avant-garde aesthetic.

The kind of backgrounds used in Dogville and Manderlay are rare, but such backgrounds have also appeared in other films throughout the history of cinema. Red

Garters (George Marshall, 1954), Vanya on 42nd Steet (Louis Malle, 1994) and Le gai savoir (Jean-Luc Godard, 1969) are three instances where a similar soundstage and barren theatre set-up composed the background for much of the films' mise-en-scène. Red Garters is a hybrid musical-western filmed on a soundstage with coloured backdrops. The self-reflexive film foregrounds its theatricality and makes numerous tongue-in-cheek references to its own staging of clichéd genre conventions. The mise-en-scène's split between a soundstage where the action unfolds and the coloured backgrounds composed of a soundstage creates leverage between the narrative's unfolding and its ironic underpinnings. Remarkably, this B-movie uses aesthetics and the stereotypes entrenched in genre conventions to render its self-reflexive commentary on the movie industry. Vanya on 42nd Street is based on the Chekov play Uncle Vanya and also features a close-to-barren set. Just as in Dogville and Manderlay, the black backgrounds of the images in Vanya on 42nd Street engulf the face of the actor, often leaving it to float in a sea of black depth and creating yet another division between foreground and background. The black soundstage portions of Le gai savoir feature Jean-Pierre Léaud and Juliet Berto as they engage in dialogue about the connections between cinema, politics, and culture. The film marks the beginning of Godard's radical phase, and the avant-garde aesthetics in the film are a part of the film's larger calling into question of the ontological underpinnings of the cinema itself.

These three films, Red Garters and Vanya on 42nd Street and Le gai savoir animate an inherent tension that also pervades the images of Dogville and Manderlay. The tension at work in these images lies between forces that foreground Hollywood style and

conventions and the oppositional pull of an avant-garde tradition insistent on visual minimalism and pared-down narrative (an aesthetics that runs through certain strands of Louis Malle's oeuvre and the dialectical film form that Godard developed during the late sixties). On the one hand, there is the star image, yet co-existing alongside the star image is the depths of the soundstage that engulf the face in a colourless and objectless mise-en-scène. The star images and emblems of Americana in Dogville and Manderlay enable these oppositional films to invoke the Hollywood system and its contingency on star vehicles and national master-narratives, and thus deterritorialize Hollywood imagery through an aesthetic that imagines an America ripe for re-working and re-definition.

In the history of Hollywood cinema, one encounters repeated constructions of America that rely on the trope of the gun and representations of gun violence. Dear Wendy deterritorializes the aesthetic sensibilities of dominant cinema that are used to incite patriotism through the gun. In classic Hollywood cinema, while the representation of gun violence is prevalent across genres – especially in the western and film noir – graphic images of the victims of gun violence are rare. Gun violence in classical cinema frequently appears without graphic bloodshed, bullet wounds, or bodily deformation. Even in contemporary Hollywood films with more gritty, 'realist' aspirations, true corporeal mutilation, destruction and death caused by gun violence is rarely captured in all of its intensity. The horror of gun violence is conventionally repressed in dominant cinema in an attempt to de-problematize the reliance of American national myths of omnipotence (which inevitably result in American exceptionalism) on the gun. The tight formal construction of films that repress such horrors in order to advance a linear plot is

effectively deterritorialized in Dear Wendy, as the film dwells on visceral images of gun violence, problematizing dominant cinema's efforts to rouse (American) patriotism through gun violence.

Dear Wendy is populated with close-ups of entry and exit wounds of gun shots. In numerous scenes, "the Dandies" get together in an abandoned mine – a place where the town's police and authority figures cannot see them – and they extensively study famous assassinations, gun technology, and the anatomy of exit wounds by watching educational videos and slide shows on the subjects. Towards the end of the film, the Dandies get into a shoot-out with the town's police after one of their grandmothers goes crazy and starts wielding a gun in the town square. All but one of the Dandies is killed in the final shootout, and as they are killed by the police, the film cuts to extreme close up shots of their exit wounds. These cut-aways have the effect of forcing the spectator to witness and think about the (corpo)real effects of gun violence that are all-too-smoothly entrenched as simple genre conventions in classical cinema. As bullets pierce the Dandies' bodies these images also de-glamourize the allure of the gun that the film itself displays, as the once non-violent Dandies take up arms. Whereas Hollywood cinema has often mythologized the gun and its use in the name of truth and justice as quintessential American values, in turn rendering the gun a dominant historical actor, Dear Wendy reveals the repressed corporeal interiority of the victims of gun violence. Gun violence as a mechanism for the smooth functioning of an action-driven plot is deterritorialized from its naturalized position in Hollywood cinema as repressed violence is visualized in Dear Wendy.

Deleuze and Guattari write that "the second characteristic of minor literature is

that everything in them is political" and that "each individual intrigue ... connect[s] immediately to politics" (Kafka 17). Deleuze builds on his previous theorization of minor literature with Guattari in Cinema 2, elaborating further on the trafficking between the political and the private: "Kafka suggested that 'major' literatures always maintained a border between the political and the private, however mobile, whilst in minor literature, the private affair was immediately political and 'entailed a verdict of life or death'" (Deleuze, Cinema 2 218). In minor works of literature and film the personal, one might say is violently political, and as the motif of the gun reminds us, It's All About Love, Dogville, Manderlay, and Dear Wendy all politicize the personal through life-and-death matters.

Similar to a Kafka novel, in Vinterberg's It's All About Love the political largely corresponds to a violent patriarchal influence over the family sphere. In the introduction to Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature, Dana Polan writes "the world of the officials and the world of the fathers are the same to Kafka" (Kafka xi). A significant component of It's All About Love's plot is the power that Elena's father wields over her body, behaviour and relationship with ex-husband John. Elena's father has her unwillingly cloned so that she will be able to continue her figure skating performances (and thus continue to make money for they family) after she is unable to perform due to the disturbance of the cosmos that affects people's hearts to the point that they get extremely fatigued and then die. The political stranglehold of the patriarch over Elena's body demonstrates how It's All About Love renders the personal political via the patriarchal familial structure and its control over the female body. Elena attempts to escape her family and rekindle her

relationship with John. The personal, familial, romantic and corporeal are all rendered political when Elena faces violent opposition that attempts to suppress her desire.

Other motifs in the film also can be seen as immediately political. For example, the film depicts abnormal weather patterns that plague the populations of the world, who have to modify their every behaviour to accommodate extreme weather conditions. People in New York have to empty their water glasses so that they do not freeze over and people in Uganda have to tie themselves to the ground to prevent themselves from flying away. At one point in the film, in reference to the bizarre happenings of the world and the equally absurd events surrounding John and Elena's relationship, Marciello even says, "It's all connected somehow, it's all connected." In It's All About Love, everything is imbued with politics and everything is connected. New York's summertime snowfalls are connected to Elena's repressive father, flying Ugandans are connected to Elena's poor health, Elena's clones are connected to the world's craving for spectacle and it all has to do with a lack of love and human connection in the globalized world. And despite the fact that the film takes place in a fictional, imaginary year 2021, the film's diegesis also connects immediately to many of the most pressing political issues of 2003 (and today!) – environmental degradation, rampant disease and health problems, growing discrepancies in wealth between Northern and Southern hemispheres resulting in a global apartheid[20], and patriarchy's relentless stranglehold on political power.

In the next section of this chapter, we will also see how von Trier's films Dogville

[20] Hardt and Negri write: "We are living in a system of global apartheid. We should be clear, however, that apartheid is not simply a system of *exclusion*, as if subordinated populations were simply cut off, worthless and disposable. In global Empire today, as it was before in South Africa, apartheid is a productive system of hierarchical *inclusion* that perpetuates the wealth of the few through the labour and the poverty of the many" (Multitude 166-167)

(2003) and Manderlay (2005) also connect the personal to the political in similar ways. In both films the character Grace is depicted in a domestic or communal setting and the political dynamics of the films unfurls in the midst of these social spheres. In Dogville, Grace happens upon the small town and is gradually ensnared in the town's political web that designates social roles for each of the town's members. As an outsider in need of protection, Grace is given the most arduous tasks. Her duties begin with having to do simple chores for the townsfolk, and by the end of the film, Grace ends up the town's sex slave, collared to a ball-and-chain. The personal injustices inflicted upon her by the town's residents are political injustices for a number of reasons. Firstly, the leader of the town is Tom (Paul Bettany), a self-stylized writer and philosopher even though he is yet to actually write a word. Tom holds unparalleled influence over the town through his persuasive speeches in the town's church, and he convinces the townsfolk that he has Grace's best interests at hand. The injustices that Grace faces are a result of Tom's influence in town hall, which actually refers to events in the nation at large. In fact, the opening shot of Dogville makes this connection between the personal and the political explicit. In a bird's eye-view long take that slowly zooms in on the radio in Tom's house, a speech by Franklin D. Roosevelt can be heard over the radio. Tom finally turns the radio off because his father only likes to listen to music. This opening shot illustrates how the public/political realm infiltrates the private sphere, the space of the domestic and the personal, through state-sanctioned radio, the most authoritarian of mediums. Dogville makes no overt mention of political institutions, yet the law still dictates the actions of the town's residents. After Grace is labelled a criminal in a wanted poster that gets posted in

the town, the residents increase the intensity of their exploitation to the point of subjecting Grace to sexual violence. This violence is only possible because the town's residents have legal recourse whereas Grace does not, and they use this as a threat to limit Grace's opportunities to escape. The personal and the corporeal (and sexual) is rendered political through a narrative that explicitly connects access to legal-political institutions to the capacity for inflicting violence on another, without the fear of politically-sanctioned retribution.

Von Trier's film Manderlay follows Dogville's interest in intertwining the political and the personal. The setting of Manderlay is a slave plantation that Grace stumbles upon during the Great Depression decades after the abolition of slavery. In the spirit of liberal humanism, Grace attempts to lend a helping hand to the slaves on the plantation by abolishing what was known as "Mam's Law," a document that dictates the social role of each type of slave on the Manderlay plantation. Grace is a proponent of "democracy" and insists that the former slaves exercise their newly granted democratic rights by voting on how to conduct the community's social duties. However, Grace's plan ends up backfiring and her plan to instill democratic values results in numerous mishaps that actually hinder's the community's prosperity and the former slaves standard of living. Grace's concern for the slaves of Manderlay is explicitly political, because Grace is outraged that the Thirteenth Amendment is not being upheld, but her concern is also deeply personal. As it turns out, Grace has a burning desire for Timothy, one of the slaves, and so her political desire to liberate the slaves through democracy is inseparable from her sexual desire. Additionally, Grace's political project of liberating the slaves results in familial

turmoil as her father speaks out against her efforts and eventually abandons her at the plantation. Once again, just as in It's All About Love and Dogville, politics conditions sexual and familial relations. Additionally, it should be noted that the connection between the personal and the political in both Dogville and Manderlay is echoed in the films' aesthetic choices. Though this will be discussed in more detail in Chapter three on the politics of space, it is worth pointing out that all walls in these two films are non-existent, and only delineated with chalk-markings so that the personal and domestic spaces of each town resident are clearly visible in all of the films' medium to long shots. Therefore, the domestic and the public, and the personal and political visually collapse onto one another, complimenting a similar intersection between the personal and political on a narrative level.

Vinterberg's 2005 drama Dear Wendy also connects the personal to the political, depicting the private, secretive domain as the only place where the political can be expressed without facing swift, violent repression from the law. The Dandies, a group of disaffected youth simply perceived as "good," "normal" kids in a small mining town go underground in order to express their fascination with guns and their shared alienation from the social space of the town where none of them seem to fit in for various reasons: Dick doesn't want to work in the mine like his father and most of the town's men; Susan is shy and has body-image issues; Huey is a cripple; and Sebastien is the only black character (other than his grandmother) in the entire town. The very fact that these characters meet in the abandoned social space of the mine shows the extent to which the town's political structure influences how this group of youths inhabits space and relates to

one another. Unable to express their desire above ground in socially legitimate ways and places, they go underground and multiply. Their ways of relating to one another and expressing themselves through elaborate costumes, naming their guns and extensive gun research are subterraneous political actions and gestures, confined to the personal until the final shoot-out scenes where these underground identities surface and violently clash with the police and the stifling conservative values the law represents.

Having outlined how It's All About Love, Dogville, Manderlay, and Dear Wendy all use deterritorialization as an important strategy and also connect the personal to a political immediacy, in the final section of this chapter I will now explore the relationship between these films and the special role It's all About Love plays within this cycle, taking into consideration Deleuze and Guattari's third characteristic of minor literature – that everything take on a collective value.

Emphasizing the collective value of minor literature, Deleuze and Guattari write that "literature finds itself positively charged with the role and function of collective, and even revolutionary, enunciation" further stating that this enunciation opens the "possibility to express another possible community and to forge the means for another consciousness and another sensibility" (Deleuze and Guattari, Kafka 17). The possibility to express another community built on a new understanding of the conditions of the world, a truly revolutionary consciousness, is a project that Deleuze finds aptly suited to cinema in the contemporary age. Deleuze writes: "What Kafka suggests for a literature is even more valid for cinema, in as much as it brings collective conditions together through itself. And this is the fact characteristic of a modern political cinema" (Deleuze, Cinema 2

222). The cinema's characteristic ability to reach masses of people is doubly true of Hollywood cinema – the cinema with the largest share of the world's markets. However, in the globalized world in which Hollywood plays a culturally imperialist role, Hollywood cinema can be seen as perpetuating the old nationalist myths of the colonizer that Ousmane Sembene attempted to "fabulate" in order to liberate his people from a not necessarily true past, towards a collectivity rooted in a newly found sense of connection to each other and the land. Deleuze and Guattari's revolutionary collectivities are articulated through an analysis of minor artists from small nations or minority ethnic groups (eg. Kafka as a Czech Jew writing in German) or artists in post-colonial situations (eg. Pierre Perrault and Ousmane Sembene), but the authors only in vague terms consider a collective enunciation or a "people yet to come"[21] an intrinsically national concern.

As the previous chapter has shown, much of the scholarship on minor cinema proposes certain national cinemas – or minor tendencies within national cinemas – as collective enunciations. Examples include: Hjort's New Danish Cinema; Martin-Jones' post-devolutionary Scottish cinema of Peter Mullan; Pujol's Catalonian minor cinema of Ventura Pons, and Marshall's Quebecois minor cinema. Given the central role of Kafka in the theory of minor literature and Deleuze's own attraction to Perrault and Sembene (from Quebec and Senegal respectively), it is understandable why a number of scholars would extend Deleuze and Guattari's concept of collective enunciation to small national cinemas. The connection that these authors make between collective enunciations and

[21] Deleuze writes that "if there were a modern political cinema, it would be on this basis: the people no longer exist, or not yet...*the people are missing*" (Cinema 2, 216). This notion of the people, since it takes place on a plane of immanence, does not suppose what such a people will look like, or if they will form along lines of national identity. Also, see Goh, Irving, "The Question of Community in Deleuze and Guattari (I): Anti-Community" in symploke - Vol 14, No 1-2, 2006, p. 216-231.

minor *national* cinemas is conditional on the nation's place in the hierarchy of global hegemony. The Autonomist Marxist critics Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri emphasize both the reactionary and revolutionary potential of nationhood and national identity. They write: "whereas the concept of nation promotes stasis and restoration in the hands of the dominant, it is a weapon for change and revolution in the hands of the subordinated" (Hardt and Negri, Empire, 106). Thus, a minor cinema yoked to nationality is only minor only insofar as that cinema organizes around conditions of subordination and a collective desire amongst a subaltern people for political change. Arguably, any link between the collective enunciation of a minor cinema and a national cinema is a risky connection to make, since it paradoxically depends on the given nation's subordinated position. If a small/subordinated nation's revolutionary, collective enunciation succeeds in changing the global political order to empower the people who compose this collective national identity, then the given nation shifts to occupy a dominant position that silences and opposes future collective enunciations that might challenge its new hegemonic position. I would argue that there are political limitations to minor national cinemas, as they are ultimately limited due to the very real possibility that they become co-opted by the reactionary vein of dominant nationalisms latent within a minor nationalism's search for legitimacy within global Empire. David Rodowick writes: "Reactionary thought wants to bolster the ego against the forces of change, to anchor it in a true, good, and changeless world; it even exhausts life by freezing identity" (Time Machine 140). Allegiance to national identity propagated by majoritarian cinema wants precisely to freeze identity to timeless qualities of nationhood: "freedom," "liberty," "democracy," "change", etc. A

national identity is more often than not a reactionary identity and national identity may in fact be one of the main obstacles to forming new, revolutionary collectivities in the age of Empire.

Whereas all four films at hand, It's All About Love, Dogville, Manderlay, and Dear Wendy, critique the inherent limitations of national identity as a catalyst for collective becomings, Vinterberg's It's All About Love emerges as the only text to enunciate the possibility for a collectivity to form around commonalities that cut across national interests, thus effectively undermining national identity as a primary rallying point for a people to come. It's All About Love manages this task through découpage, shot selection, and mise-en-scène that unrelentingly maintains a global perspective even while telling an individuated love story. The result is a film that uses the romance of a bourgeois couple as an initial point of identification before dismantling the closed cartography of the romantic relationship. Global phenomena and commonalities condition and shape the couple's love, forcing the spectator to consider the inherently collective concerns of the personal. Such a consideration undercuts the implied values of American individualism that emanates from Hollywood romance narratives, opening the individual and the couple onto the collective. The couple's romantic love that only blossoms amidst a milieu of capitalist alienation connects to a transnational collectivity that amplifies the force of their love and extends it by overcoming the economic alienation of capitalism and the social alienation of Hollywood-style individualism keen on reproducing a homogeneous national identity based on the barren heterogeneity of individualism, not true singularities. Love is politicized.

Let us look at some images and cinematography from It's All About Love to better illustrate the film's insistence on the collective. The film's editing patterns support Marciello's claims that "it's all connected." The film opens with shots of Africa that frame John and Elena's love story. These images of a barren African landscape which open the film, and images of flying Ugandans, which close the film, bookends the romance plot so that the crises in the relationship correspond to crises in the world at large. Midway into the film, the editing repeatedly cuts away from the primary narrative's action to depict the extreme weather patterns of Venice and Paris, signalling that something is intrinsically wrong with the state of the world. This background narrative buzz regarding unexplained global weather phenomenon seeps into the American setting through mass-mediated images on television about the plight of the flying Ugandans, problems with extreme weather and rampant heart disease. At one point, when John goes to Elena's figure skating premiere, the mise-en-scène registers Elena's televised figure- skating routine right next to news broadcasts about the events in Uganda. This shot registers John and Elena's love story on the same visual, aural, and narrative plane as global catastrophes and the subsequent shot of John's face suggests that he must make inner decisions about his personal situation and love life based on the "external" conditions of the world. He must choose either to live in an illusory elitist social bubble that reassures him that everything will be alright, or take flight, carrying the knowledge of real-world conditions, as bad as they may be. Another shot where loud thunder takes over the soundtrack just as John is momentarily incapacitated by a devastating headache expresses how global conditions that affect that collective are internalized and physically experienced by John.

Additionally, the importance of Elena's clones to the film's politics cannot be underestimated, as the emotions of horror they provoke in Elena suggest a perversion of American individualism. The whole cloning scheme in the film is presented as a patriarch's attempt to capitalize on the popularity of the spectacle of his daughter's persona. The American cult of the individual is pushed beyond its limits in It's All About Love, and to absurd results, wherein the individual female-as-spectacle is cloned/multiplied so that the original allure of the individual – precisely their uniqueness, or *individuality* – is robbed in the name of individualism.

These scenes, shots and editing patterns from It's All About Love allude to some of the ways that the film blasts apart the bourgeois couple through an insistence on the presence of peoples whose very survival hinges on radical social change, as does the survival of the couple. This pact of survival through social change calls on a "people to come" who identify not with nationality, ethnicity, language, gender, or ideology (the basis of identity politics), but on common welfare, or common-wealth. A collectivity with this desire for new social relations that privilege common wealth (like human health, the environment, etc.) is necessarily a diverse and heterogeneous collectivity with indivisible differences. This collectivity is not really a people; it is a multitude.

My use of the term multitude is in need of some unpacking in order to clarify how the invocation of the term attempts to overcome the tenuous connection between Deleuze's "people yet to come" and the theories of minor cinema that bind the collective enunciation of such a people to national identity. Hardt and Negri succinctly define multitude as follows: "The multitude designates an active social subject, which acts on

the basis of what the singularities share in common. The multitude is an internally different, multiple social subject whose constitution and action is based not on identity or unity (or, much less, indifference) but in what it has in common" (Hardt and Negri, Multitude 100). Later in their study, Hardt and Negri elaborate further on this definition. They explain: "The new science of the multitude based on the common, we should be careful to point out, does not imply any unification of the multitude or any subordination of differences. The multitude is composed of radical differences, singularities, that can never be synthesized into an identity" (Multitude, 355). Multitude insists on the heterogeneity of a people to come, a collectivity that will break free from the confines of national identity, and it is precisely in this sense that such a collectivity does not really constitute a *people*. In Empire, Hardt and Negri argue that the nation-state and its accompanying ideology actually produces the people and naturalizes the national grouping. They write:

> Although 'the people' is posed as the originary basis of nation, *the modern conception of the people is in fact a product of the nation-state*, and survives only within its specific ideological context. Many contemporary analyses of nations and nationalism from a wide variety of perspectives go wrong precisely because they rely unquestioningly on the naturalness of the concept and the identity of the people. We should note that the concept of the people is very different from that of the multitude (Hardt and Negri, Empire 102).

If the state produces the people, as Hardt and Negri suggest, then a collective enunciation that challenges the state, its repressive mechanisms, and its accompanying national

identity, cannot form a people. A collective enunciation like It's All About Love that summons a people to come – a people we have not yet seen, a people that does not cling to an identity that has long been exhausted – summons a multitude that overruns the reterritorializing apparatus of the nation-state. By connecting Hardt and Negri's multitude to Deleuze and Guattari's revolutionary collectivity, this thesis attempts to overcome the limits of identity politics that much of the scholarship of minor cinema has reterritorialized onto, in order to rearticulate the theory of minor cinema that has been bound to identity politics of marginalized groups. For as Guattari states: "Nothing is less marginal than the problem of the marginal"[22] (229, Soft Subversions).

In this chapter we have seen how the films Dogville, Manderlay, and Dear Wendy take part in the deconstructive task of de-mythologizing the nation through fabulation – a process through which America is portrayed as an imaginary space and a cultural construction in order to show the extent to which even the *real* America is a fantasy space insofar as it is constructed out of visibly or invisibly violent images, stories, myths, tropes, conventions, and styles that dominate commercial cinema, television and popular culture. It's All About Love compliments this deconstructive task with the constructive task of positing new collectivities based on shared global interests and transnational commonalities that undercut the homogenizing forces of (national) identity politics. Although It's All About Love is the only film in this cycle to take on a truly collective value because it maintains a global perspective (whereas Dogville, Manderlay, and Dear

[22] Guattari echoes this position in Chaosmosis: an ethico-aesthetic paradigm where he argues that: "[C]ontemporary history is increasingly dominated by rising demands for subjective singularity – quarrels over language, autonomist demands, issues of nationalism and of the nation, which, in total ambiguity, express on the one hand an aspiration for national liberation, but also manifest themselves in what I would call conservative reterritorializations of subjectivity" (3)

Wendy remain confined to the representation of the United States), the other three films reinforce It's All About Love's call for new global collectivities, for a people to come, by deconstructing the myths of national identity that clog deterritorialized flows of desire and their potential for challenging the nation-state sovereignty through new socio-political formations that recognize and respond to the desires of the multitude.

Postscript: A Major Contrast: *It's All About Love vs. The Interpreter*

In order to further illustrate how It's All About Love can be read as a work of minor cinema, this postscript to chapter two will contrast Vinterberg's apocalyptic sci-fi film with The Interpreter (Sydney Pollack, 2005). The Interpreter traffics in many of the same issues as It's All About Love and was released during the same historical period. Another reason why The Interpreter serves as a foil to the films at hand is that it stars both Nicole Kidman and Sean Penn, who appear in Dogville and It's All About Love respectively. Their star images operate quite differently in these films, and this critical difference will be alluded to in chapter five, when I analyze the politics of perception in It's All About Love, since perception is intrinsically bound up with the star in these films (the spectator's perception of the star, the star's perception of the diegetic world, and the chains of affect that link the star's perception of the diegetic world to the perception of the spectator). The Interpreter is major cinema *par excellence*, not because of its use of stars, for star images can surely be subversive and provoke readings that undercut the orthodox reading of a film, but because it works to uphold and further the agenda of Integrated World Capitalism's dominant institutions.[23]

Sydney Pollack is a prominent Hollywood director-producer with a long history of engaging in political themes. In addition to The Interpreter, some of the films he has directed and/or produced include The Way We Were (1973), Out of Africa (1985), and Michael Clayton (2007). In his book Cinema Wars, Douglas Kellner focuses on Michael Clayton as an example of the political filmmaking that emerged from Hollywood during

[23] Richard Dyer invokes the term star-image in his books Stars and Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society to emphasize how the extra-textual circulation of filmic images contribute to the construction of star personas and their cultural significance.

the Bush-Cheney era, a filmmaking which "presents the destructive effects of a corrupt corporate and conservative culture" (Kellner 29). Kellner's claims about Michael Clayton are quite consistent with the overall tone of the book that trumpets Hollywood's largely *liberal* point of view as an expression of cultural-political resistance to the neoconservative policies enacted by the Bush-Cheney regime (Kellner 3, 12). Although Kellner does not mention The Interpreter in his study, this film is intimately related to the canon of politically themed Hollywood films that Kellner analyzes in relation to the politics of the period, such as The Manchurian Candidate , War of the Worlds (Steven Spielberg 2005), and Syriana, to name a few.

The Interpreter is a liberal, humanist, and secular film-text that can certainly be read as critical of the Bush-Cheney regime's conservative, militaristic, and Judeo-Christian ideological underpinnings. The Interpreter is characteristic of a *progressive* film, yet at the same time, the film's critique of the era's dominant ideology is highly invested in the institutions that the film itself critiques. To briefly sum up the film's thematic preoccupations, the political thriller's setting alternates between the United Nations headquarters in New York and "the Republic of Motobo," a fictional African nation, and native homeland of Silvia Broome (Nicole Kidman). Silvia is an interpreter at the UN who speaks the little-known (fictional) dialect of "Ku" and overhears a plot to assassinate Matobo's head of state. Silvia subsequently becomes the centre of a political conspiracy and is placed under the protection of Tobin Keller (Sean Penn), a hard-nosed Secret Service agent who never ceases to pronounce his allegiance to the security of the United States of America. Eventually, the film is resolved by a conclusion that suggests

the corrupt African dictator be tried at the International Criminal Court in the Hague (a court that the U.S. does not legally recognize). Having done her duty to protect the US, Silvia returns to her home in Matobo. The film's conclusion as a plea to non-violence is contingent upon non-violence as a doctrine to be implemented by the UN and the ICC – two institutions which (like the film itself) are highly invested in nation-state sovereignty, which is a form of rule based on the monopoly of the use of violence. Paradoxically, The Interpreter makes humanist pleas to end war on the one hand, and then glorifies sacrifice for the nation – and the nation state's [or State Apparatus'] deployment of the war-machine – on the other[24].

Clearly, The Interpreter contains more than its fair share of contradictions, yet more important in the context of this thesis is how the The Interpreter acts as a major foil to It's All About Love. Whereas The Interpreter proves highly invested in the nation-state, to a degree that this investment contradicts its otherwise humanist themes, It's All About Love's story revels in the transnational motifs of undoubtedly interconnected global communities affected by similar phenomena such as weather patterns. As already alluded to, The Interpreter celebrates molar institutions formed by, and dependent on the nation-state such as the UN and the ICC. Unlike It's All About Love, the film's drama does not unfold in the personal realm, but rather on the global stage of the UN. It's All About Love, in contrast, focuses on the molecular character of (a majoritarian) power though a

[24] According to Deleuze and Guattari, the war machine is certainly not synonymous with the oppression of the Repressive State Apparatus. On the contrary, they argue that the war machine is "of nomadic origin and is directed against the State apparatus" (230). They argue that the State, in turn, tries to appropriate the "war machine" and transform it into a stable military institution: "One of the fundamental problems of the state is to appropriate the war machine that is foreign to it and make it a piece in its apparatus, in the form of a stable military institution; and the State has always encountered major difficulties in this" (Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus 230)

representation of patriarchy in the domestic and personal realms. The world of the fathers (according to Deleuze and Guattari, a "major" threat in the "minor" literature of Franz Kafka)[25] features prominently in the film and the exercise of patriarchal power can be traced back to the patriarchy that governs the rhetoric of nationalism. Just as Kafka links the world of fathers to the bureaucratic machine and world of Hapsburg officials, It's All About Love links these two co-existent networks and exposes the high degree of codependency between the personal and public spheres involved in patriarchal domination. Whereas It's All About Love illuminates the patriarchal workings inside the personal domain to comment on the patriarchal structures in the molar structures of society at large (such as the nation-state), The Interpreter works quite differently. The Interpreter masks the implicit patriarchy of institutions like the UN and the nation-state and espouses the importance of duty and service to such institutions. The potential love interest between Sean Penn and Nicole Kidman in the film is never allowed to flourish because both of their characters feel such a strong obligation to fulfill dutiful sacrifice to their respective nations (and in doing so, make their deceased relatives proud). The Interpreter concludes with Silvia's deportation from the US, and the loss of her position at the UN. The film's female protagonist is banished from the phallocentric institution of the UN and sent back to a fictional African country, but only after putting her life on the line for the advancement of the institutions' political legitimacy. In The Interpreter the drama plays out at the level of molar institutions. Majoritarian powers are precisely what is at stake: the Law, the nation, the UN, the president, Human Rights, Bureaucracy, the

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[25] The "world of the father" is also the world of "judges, commissioners, bureaucrats, and so on," figures that populate Kafka's The Trial and construct its claustrophobic landscape of triangulated Oedipal confines. (Deleuze and Guattari, Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature 12).

Homeland, Language, Names; etc.

The Interpreter's treatment of language is especially telling in relation to the issues of minor cinema, as the film explicitly deals with the issue of a "minor language" (in this case the fictional language of Ku) in relation to the major, imperial English language that is most commonly spoken in the New York setting that surrounds the UN headquarters. One of the main dramatic currents running through the film is the tension surrounding an impending assassination that Silvia must circumvent in order to prevent an international scandal that would set back the UN's *progressive* political agenda of reigning in rogue African dictators. As the UN's only interpreter capable of speaking "Ku," Silvia serves as the only link between a minor language and a major institution. Whereas a minor gesture would be to make the major institution suit the minoritarian needs of the "Matobo" people, The Interpreter privileges the majoritarian needs of dominant institutions. Matobo is constructed as a tragic "Othered" space, and the "Matobo" people are marginalized in the narrative's entrenchment of the UN – rather than themselves – as the key to their liberation. The freedom of an impoverished people is left up to a white, bilingual African played by Nicole Kidman, and only inasmuch that she is able to serve the needs of the "world community" before being cast back to Africa. The Interpreter effectively conjures up a drama that preys on the very distinction of major/minor politics, and sides with the former, relegating the fictional "Matobo" to the subservient margins.

There is also a marked difference regarding the films' respective treatments of fiction and reality. It's All About Love takes place in a fantasy space/time and initiates the United States into an imaginary world where the nation-state can be reconfigured to

connect to real-world politics. So while the film divulges in fantasy, it essentially aims to operate in the realm of the political with specific reference to the American politics of the period. On the other hand, The Interpreter takes place in an actual political sphere (the UN), but is effectively drawn into the realm of fictional drama, epitomized by the fictional country of Matobo. The political drama that unfolds in The Interpreter trades on "realistic" stereotypes about African nationalism, but ultimately is disconnected from any political commitments because its claims to real drama are rooted in the fictional Matobo. Although The Interpreter is a political thriller that trades on a "realist" representation of real-world political formation, the film is actually far removed from any sort of political commitments outside of the film's diegesis. As an example of this distance and lack of political commitment, consider how the director has shied away from using an actual African nation, and instead conjures up "Matobo" – a figure that functions to unhook the film from real-world political commitments that it otherwise purports to possess.

The Interpreter does serve as a political critique of American foreign policy, yet inevitably falls back on the very structures that enables the types of political violence that the film denounces. The main culprit here is the film's valoration of the nation-state. The following chapter will investigate more closely how It's All About Love, Dogville, Manderlay and Dear Wendy represent the nation in relation to the politics of space, since all of these films take a reflexive approach to representing politically charged space, especially as they relate to the nation.

Chapter Three: The Politics of Space

"Widening the streets is designed to make the erection of barricades impossible, and new streets are to furnish the shortest route between the barracks and workers' districts. Contemporaries christen the operation 'strategic embellishment'"

(Benjamin, The Arcades Project 12).

Space is political. Walter Benjamin provides a perfect example of the inherently political nature of urban space when he focuses on the widening of the streets in Paris. This took place after revolts against King Louis Philippe in order to prevent the future erection of barricades. In the age of Empire, the strategy of the ruling classes has shifted. Instead of widening the streets, the bourgeoise has multiplied the streets. Now the question seems to be not whether barricades can be constructed that are wide enough, but rather if enough barricades can be constructed to block the ever-expanding global arteries where flows of capital, weapons, information, and affect flow. In order to do so, a space – and one's place in it – must first be made comprehensible. Von Trier and Vinterberg's films about America during the Bush-Cheney era concern themselves with this very notion of mapping out the political contours of a given national space. Their politicization of space simultaneously comments on the power structures centred on America, which reverberate throughout the world. These films depict different types of space, and offer different aesthetic representations of space. This chapter will closely analyze how space is configured in key scenes from Dogville, Manderlay, It's All About Love and Dear Wendy. These films use space in order to advance a critique of territorialized molar power structures such as the nation-state and the nuclear family. In addition to

commenting on localized instances of molecular fascisms that get represented through the American settings in the films, their overall critiques remain applicable to global political formations. These films recognize that shifting power structures of Empire are in large part determined by the shifting flows of capital, and they represent space in a manner that tracks such flows of power, the forces that counter such power, and the consequences of this conflict. In the introduction to A Thousand Plateaus Brian Massumi reinforces the distinction between power and force. He writes: "Force is not to be confused with power. Force arrives from outside to break constraints and open new vistas. Power builds walls" (A Thousand Plateaus, xiii). Movements and visions through spaces and walls are tied up in this struggle between power and force, a palpable struggle in the films by von Trier and Vinterberg set in America during the Bush-Cheney era.

The blacked-out soundstage setting of Dogville and Manderlay reconfigures conventional representations of space found in Hollywood film in order to extend the films' highly political narratives beyond any localized space, such as America, and throughout the globalized world. Dogville and Manderlay question American foreign policy, but they are also critical of nationalism and the will to power in general. Lars von Trier has a history of commenting on nationalism in relation to space. A paradigmatic example of this is his film Europa (1991), released a year after the reunification of Germany, clearly a situation that involved a conjuncture between space and politics. The film is a cross-cultural production, directed by a Dane and set in Germany, and like Dogville and Manderlay, it focuses on a cross-cultural interaction between America and Europe. Despite the different national interests involved, Rosalind Galt notices how space

functions politically to undermine the typically national associations with certain types of spaces, such as the German ruins in 1945. She writes: "In Zentropa, German space is not legible as national, and does not primarily evoke a traditional national history, but rather stands in a metonymic relation to the troubled political and historical spaces of Europe" (Galt 5). Galt also picks up on how von Trier's experimental aesthetics and shot-choices allow for a separation of filmic space and the nation. In reference to the film's avoidance of destroyed urban landscapes, she writes: "The omission of such shots – and indeed of exterior long shots of any kind – is a structuring absence in Zentropa, a void that works against any mobilization of nation, effectively bracketing the mise-en-scène as a spectacle that refuses authenticity, a cinematic space outside the discourse of place" (Galt 9). This quotation emphasizes the film's formalist aesthetic that can construct space and place without reterritorializing itself onto myths of nationhood per se, but still pose larger political questions about the extent to which nations relate to one another, and the outcome of these relationships. Europa also hints at von Trier's budding interest in space, nationality, and especially America. The film depicts American military involvement in post-war Germany, and illustrates how American military forces attempted to eradicate Werewolves, or underground Nazi sympathizers. The victim of the film is an American civilian who works as a railway conductor, and gets caught up the political espionage plots and violence. Of importance here is that the film focuses on how a civilian, or a previously depoliticized individual, becomes inadvertently political because of their geographical or spatial position. The conductor in Europa becomes politicized precisely because he is living within Germany, and because he is on a train, a vehicle that grants

people mobility to cross borders, and thus imbues them with power. Since the train is a vehicle of mobility in a space with imposed limits on movement through borders, military checkpoints and sanctions, the train becomes the site of clandestine political activities and terrorism. When one political regime attempts to place limits, especially spatial limits on another, Europa suggests that such antagonistic relationships result in violence.

Like the narrative development of Europa, the drama of Dogville and Manderlay revolves around space and mobility. In Dogville the drama begins upon Grace's arrival to the small town of Dogville. The town is secluded and enclosed by the economic and social constraints of the Great Depression. The only character who leaves the town is the truck driver Ben (Zeljko Ivanec). This character's ability to enter and leave the town is significant because the driver's mobility is contingent upon flows of capital. Since Dogville is an impoverished town with next to no economic viability, there are very few comings and goings from the isolated space. The film depicts a situation wherein the possibility for human mobility through and beyond the space of the town depends on movements of capital. The only characters who enter or leave the town other than the truck driver are Grace, her father and his gang, and the police officer who comes to town to warn the residents about Grace, who turns out to be wanted. These characters' capacity for mobility is tied to either their authority in the eyes of the state, or their economic position. The sheriff who comes to town is an embodiment of the nation-state, and his entrance into the sphere of the town marks the centralized government and its corresponding dominant ideology's penetration into the town. Whereas the town's poor, uneducated inhabitants are stuck in place, endlessly performing monotonous, mundane

tasks that form a lifelong routine, the authority figure of the sheriff – the embodiment of law and order – can enter a town to reinforce its stasis, and then leave to continue such reinforcements in other towns. Grace's father and his gangsters also enter and leave the town twice. Although they exist on the outskirts of society and are not representative of national, or political authority, they, like the law, act on patriarchal authority, an exercise of power that is reinforced by their access to capital. Not surprisingly, these patriarchs seem to have plenty of money from their involvements in some East Coast rackets. Grace's father and his entourage first enter Dogville in search of Grace who has run away from the family for an undisclosed reason, though the plot suggests some sort of dispute with her father. Though Grace enters Dogville in order to escape her father's stranglehold over her life, she is not able to succeed in leaving the town until her father returns around the end of the film and helps her escape by killing all of the town's human inhabitants, effectively wiping Dogville off the map. Only through her father's use of force can Grace free herself from the extreme forms of sadistic patriarchy embedded in the social milieu of the town. Dogville is thus thoroughly concerned with space, mobility and power. While on the one hand, Grace travels to and from the town along with the deterritorialized flows of capital, the power of capital gets reterritorialized by the state and the Father, and both strata of power perpetually insist on stasis and immobility, especially for breakaway particles like Grace, who can only claim her own movements through her father's power.

Manderlay, the 2005 sequel to Dogville, is largely concerned with the same connections between space, power and movement. The slave plantation setting of

Manderlay parallels the space of the town in Dogville, in one sense because it is a confining space. A slave plantation is essentially a spatial structure where mobility is once again linked to power. A person is a slave, in part because he or she is confined to a certain space (owned as private property) with no little or no opportunity to escape. One of the first iconic shots outside of the Manderlay plantation depicts a lynched black man hanging from a tree just beyond the plantation grounds. Escape from the space of the plantation for its inhabitants is threatened with death. Just as in the town of Dogville, mobility equals power, and the vast majority of inhabitants possess neither. Once again, Grace's father and his posse is a group that demonstrates its power through its mobility or capacity to drive to and from the plantation. Grace, while benefitting from her renewed relationship with her father which grants her temporary mobility, resides at the plantation for most of the narrative. One of the only characters who frequents the plantation is the white travelling gambler, Dr. Hector (Zeljko Ivanec). Zeljko Ivanec plays the two characters in Dogville and Manderlay who have access to capital and mobility. The travelling gambler is free-floating; like capital itself, he moves along with forces of deterritorialization. None of the slaves have the economic freedom to move off the plantation, yet significantly the one slave who does manage to successfully leave the plantation for a high stakes card game with Dr. Hector is Timothy (Isaach De Bankolé). He is categorized as a "Pleasing Nigger," or as a chameleon according to mam's law – the ruling document of the plantation. It gets revealed quite late in the film that Timothy had left the plantation after stealing the slave community's financial savings in order to gamble in card games with the travelling gambler. Only the "chameleon," by giving up

his identity as a slave is able to move and leave the plantation, albeit not freely, while the other slaves who remain yoked to a static identity as a certain "type" of slave (according to Mam's law) are not able to leave the plantation. Though the white townsfolk of Dogville were not slaves, their subjugation to their immediate environment, and to space more generally, parallels the relationship between Manderlay's slaves and their surroundings. An important factor in this comparison is that Manderlay is still run as a slave plantation, even though slavery was abolished decades earlier. So while the echoes of slavery still reverberate through Manderlay, both films point to other factors contributing to slavery other than just slavery laws. One of these contributing factors is capitalism.

Both Dogville and Manderlay represent space and movement in a manner that shows how capitalism can be seen acting in conjunction with patriarchy. The slaves of Manderlay are kept in place by something called "Mam's Law," the book of rules that governs the slaves' behaviour, years after slavery has been abolished. Though the laws at first seem to be a product of Mam (Lauren Bacall), in a major plot twist towards the end of the film it gets revealed that the laws were written by the slave elder Wilhelm (Danny Glover). This revelation proves startling for Grace who can't believe the extent to which the slaves were being oppressed and categorized by one of their own people. As it turns out, the plantation ran according to patriarchal laws, written by a man, and not by Mam.

Once again, as in Dogville, a similar situation takes place where people, and especially women suffer at the hands of patriarchal control over a designated area. In Dogville, Tom is the self-appointed leader of the town and he essentially is the one who

makes decisions with regards to Grace. Most of these decisions originate from town hall meetings where the residents are seated, and Tom the orator stands and leads the discussions. Tom greatly influences the town's decision making process and as a result, Grace is subjected to the patriarchal control of the town. This control is manifested in spatial terms (a spatial imprisonment itself intensified, in the manner of a 'minor literature') through the dramatic chalk lines that determine the characters' actions and blocking on the minimalist sound set. Grace's daily routine of serving the town's residents in exchange for them letting her stay in Dogville without telling the police consists of Grace endlessly travelling around the different places of the town in a circular fashion. The schedule that Grace is subjected to is so tight that her movements are completely dictated by her obligations to the town. The never-ending routine of chores for the town's residents results in a never-ending circle of motion that is impossible for Grace to escape. The intensity of this circuit of movement gets heightened when the sheriff comes to town on the Fourth of July to pin up a wanted poster calling for Grace's arrest. In order to justify secretly keeping Grace in the town and not turning her in to the authorities, the town – led by Tom – decides to keep Grace around as long as she increases the level of service that she offers them. This decision leads to Grace's forced transformation into the town's sex slave. At one point, Grace attempts to escape from the now horrifying situation that she finds herself by cutting a deal with Ben the freight driver who promises to help her escape. Even he turns on Grace and demands sex from her before returning her to Dogville. In order to prevent any further attempts at leaving the town, a ball-and-chain is attached to a collar around Grace's neck, complete with a cowbell. Grace's

movements are completely governed by the town's patriarchal control over her body and she is effectively stripped of any freedom. All of this exploitation is allowed to take place mainly because Grace is on the run from the law and her father. As a rogue person on the fringes of a patriarchal society Grace cannot exercise any fundamental freedoms, which in these films, is reserved for people who are in good standing with the patriarchal figures of authority.

Since Dogville and Manderlay are the first two films in a yet to be completed trilogy they share almost identical aesthetic strategies (and are quite unique in their cinematography and setting). In terms of the films' radical aesthetics, one is reminded of the blacked-out portions of Le Gai Savoir (1969). The unique aesthetic representations and re-workings of space function to critique patriarchy, capitalism, and nationalism. Both films are shot on a soundstage with barren sets void of any sort of architecture or buildings. This means that the homes in the town of Dogville and the plantation of Manderlay are completely see-through, invisible, and non-existent. Chalk markings of dashes and informational text appear on the floor of the soundstage in order to demarcate and name these fictional structures. For example, Tom's house and Elm street (the town's main street) are demarcated by white lines and the all-caps text "Thomas Edison's House" and "Elm St." respectively. The lighting in each film is done in such a way that the background is either always completely black or white, resulting in an effectively barren and to use the language of Deleuze and Guattari 'impoverished' landscape. The camera angles in the film also work to foreground the films' representation of spaces. The opening shot of the film is an extreme high-angle shot from a bird's eye view directly

down onto the town. These overhead shots self-reflexively draw attention to the film as a diminutive set, emphasizing the spatial construction of the film and the confining geography of the town. The opening shot of the film lays out the spatial organization of the town, with Tom the patriarch's house located in the centre beside another space of power, the church that also doubles as a town hall where political decisions regarding Grace are made. Intense overhead shots recur throughout the films. One of the most important uses of this shot occurs after the town insists that Grace increase her workload. An overhead shot appears in fast motion of Grace travelling from house to house and a superimposed sundial appears on in the right side of the frame to emphasize how the hours of labour that she is committed to working result in her imprisonment in the space of the town. The film also concludes with an overhead shot similar to the introductory shot, although at this point in the narrative all the characters have been killed by the gangsters who accompany Grace's father to town. The overhead shots continuously re-establish the boundary of the town and serve as a reminder of both its small size and seclusion, while the indeterminate backgrounds void of anything but black or white (not tied to any concrete topographical images) suggest that this town and the problems that it faces could actually exist anywhere, are universal.

The overhead shots never extend beyond the town of Dogville, and thus create a sense of claustrophobia despite the wide-open mise-en-scene free from any sort of walls or opaque visuals. The "open" sense conveyed by the visuals can paradoxically be read as contributing to a claustrophobic feeling in the town. Though this logic may at first seem counterintuitive, the lack of barriers to vision usually provided by the walls of homes

creates a space of heightened surveillance. Even when the camera is placed in Tom's house, for example, the actions of the other residents can be seen through the imaginary walls. Furthermore, the aesthetic employed by Dogville reinforces the social connections between the town's different inhabitants. It would be easy to forget about one of the more marginal residents, such as Olivia (Cleo King) who has a fairly small role in the narrative if it weren't for the town's visual transparency. Each shot contains the weight of every action that takes place. When Tom and Grace have a private discussion in Tom's house, the wider repercussions of their interactions can be seen looming in the background. One of the reasons that the potential romantic coupling of Tom and Grace can never take place is because of the interference of the town. Most romantic relationships require a degree of privacy in order to succeed. Only when the couple is in private, and seemingly secluded from other social forces can the necessary steps be taken to develop either a romantic or sexual partnership. In Dogville, Grace and Tom never occupy the frame alone for long before the camera catches a glimpse of the happenings of another's home. The visual intrusion of others into the cinematic space of their relationship parallels the town's undue influence over their relationship. Although Tom adopts a leadership role in relation to the town, the town residents still greatly influence his decision making through their "democratic" town hall votes on how they should decide to treat Grace. Many of the town's women see Grace a threatening force – a seductress who attracts too much attention from their respective husbands. The town's men view Grace as a sexual object, and a sexual outlet from the town's stagnant sexuality. Tom and Grace's failed relationship spirals into abuse the more the town gets involved, and this descent is

crystallized in the film's layered mise-en-scène. The film's spaces highlight the (often unwanted) interconnectivity between all of the town's residents and thus the impossibility of escaping social forces, even in one's own home.

The construction of space in Dogville and Manderlay can also be considered Brechtian, in both the aesthetic and political sense. The Brechtian aesthetics of these films distance themselves from Hollywood cinema and open space for a critique of the dominant ideology of Bush-Cheney America. Dogville and Manderlay are both anti-illusionist films and they do away with the conventions of "Hollywood realism" that aim to reproduce the outside world. As previously mentioned, through shooting on a barren soundstage, both Dogville and Manderlay counter the normative strategies of Hollywood-style dramas. Anti-illusionism is one of the main facets of Brechtian aesthetics (Harvey 58) and both films directly confront the illusionist cinema via their blacked out mise-en-scène, also self-reflexively foregrounding the film's constructed drama by situating it entirely on a stage. Walter Benjamin writes: "Epic theatre, [Brecht] declared, must not develop actions but represent conditions. As we shall presently see, it obtains its 'conditions' by allowing the actions to be interrupted" (Benjamin, "Author as Producer" 99). Not only do Dogville and Manderlay in their impoverished 'minor' spatial representation allude to the conditions of their own production through the soundstage setting, these films also aim to reveal the social conditions of the historical moment in which they were released. The breaking down of these films into intertitled chapters also constitutes an interruptive device. Illusionist cinema attempts to conceal its roots in the bourgeois novel and its chapter structure, whereas these films flaunt such conventions. In

addition to the use of title cards, Dogville and Manderlay explicitly foreground their constructedness and narrative cinema's novelistic roots in the use of John Hurt's narration. Hurt's British accent makes these films sounds like a sort of Dickens adaptation. The narration is used self-reflexively as another reminder to the audience of the artifice of the film-text.

More importantly, Dogville and Manderlay represent conditions in society at large, which at first may seem far removed from the diegesis of the films. The references to U.S. economic depression and slavery, the limitations on mobility discussed earlier, the gender politics at play, and the depictions of capitalism at work all serve to comment on the anachronistic lawlessness and oppression that still exists in the Bush-Cheney era America and the global context of this political regime. In Dogville and Manderlay, the personal becomes political because there are no walls. The contradictions in society that Grace witnesses are represented through a Brechtian lens that provokes the audience to find similar contradictions in its own political situation. Brecht writes: "The bourgeois theatre's performances always aim at smoothing over contradictions, at creating false harmony, at idealization" (Brecht 277). Instead of smoothing over contradictions, the blacked-out aesthetic of Dogville and Manderlay brings contradictions to the forefront because character actions, dialogue, and expressions stand out from the minimalist soundstage. An example of the contradictions between patriarchy and capitalism represented in the films are the contradictory demands that the town places on Grace with respect to the coexistence of sexual labour and puritan morality. The contradictory expectations surrounding Grace seem completely audacious and inconceivable outside

the world of the film. However, the expectation that women simultaneously fill sexualized and de-sexualized roles is commonplace in many cultures around the world, including contemporary American society. The way that Dogville works then, is to show the contradictions within the world of the film, within the production of the film itself, in order to make the audience question the contradictions of its own social situation. Benjamin writes: "Epic theatre does not reproduce conditions; rather it discloses, it uncovers them." (Benjamin 100). Brecht himself stresses the important role in of the work of art to the spectator's thoughts. He writes: "The essential point of epic theatre is perhaps that it appeals less to the feelings than to the spectator's reason" (Brecht 23). The audience also becomes aware of the contradictions in wider society through these films because of their preoccupations with what Deleuze and Guattari term molecular fascisms.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, all of the four films at hand depict molecular fascisms, and the examples that Deleuze and Guattari provide include the "band, gang, sect, family, town, [and the] neighbourhood" (A Thousand Plateaus 215). In Dogville and Manderlay, the family and the town are the most important political sites. Through the use of the aforementioned Brechtian aesthetics, the films aim to show the contradictions of these micropolitical organisms. In representing the contradictions between the town and the family, the spectator is encouraged to notice and detect the contradictions in the world outside of the film. The town's treatment of Grace invites the spectator to contemplate the contradictory demands that the dominant ideology places on women. Likewise, the depictions of slavery in Manderlay parallels the exploitative demands of capitalism, and neoliberalism's complicity with these demands. Since both of

these scenarios play out in a past historical period and in unfamiliar space it becomes easier for the spectator to see the contradictions at hand, as opposed to films that adopt a Hollywood realist style which encourages spectator identification with the film's diegesis. At the same time, in returning anachronistically to earlier moments of oppression and crime in American history (American gangsters, slavery), the 9/11 cowboy rhetoric of the Bush-Cheney regime war on terror ("we will smoke them out of their holes")[26] is also implicated and addressed. These films are especially critical of the micropolitical power of these formations – formations where the power of one radical element of a social situation leads to patriarchy, domination, and exploitation. In Dogville, Grace's father passes along a business card along to Tom at the beginning of the film. Tom's influential role over the town's politics places him in a position of power throughout the narrative that is in large part derived from his possession of this simple card. Through a mere exchange such as passing along a business card, patriarchy and the thirst for power infiltrates Dogville like the cancerous microfascisms that Deleuze and Guattari describe.

Thomas Vinterberg's It's All About Love and Dear Wendy also focus on molecular fascist formations and growths. It's All About Love follows up on Dogville and Manderlay's focus on the family and especially the father, while Dear Wendy centres on a the band or the gang. Also similar to Dogville, It's All About Love features a female protagonist, Elena who is also on the run from an oppressive father. Once again, movement and space feature prominently, especially in relation to the (im)mobility of Elena. The narrative centres around John and Elena, a broken up couple about to sign

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[26] The infamous quote circulated widely, becoming a common "Bush-ism." The quote can be accessed in the online newspaper article "Bush Says US Will Wage 'long and Unrelenting War'" that appears on The Independent website.

their divorce papers. Before this can take place John stumbles across a clone of Elena, and as it turns out, her father has forcibly cloned her in order to capitalize on her figure skating stardom after her imminent death due to a widespread heart disease. The molecular fascism of the family is made apparent in a scene after John discovers the clone. John is invited to an aristocratic dinner party held by Elena's father and the rest of her family. As soon as he enters the party, a shot of the entire family standing as if in a family portrait appears from John's point of view. The family stands still, in tableau, and at this moment it becomes apparent that the law of the father has spread throughout the family, and the staging of the tableau reflects this power dynamic. This is the proliferating "power" intensified in the portrait, similar to what Deleuze and Guattari detect in Kafka's modernist writing (Kafka 92). Elena stands at the right hand of her father, seemingly in complete obedience along with the rest of her extended family. After this scene at the party, John and Elena secretly flee from the oppressive family and its control over their relationship. Once again, like with Tom and Grace, there are outsiders who intrude onto the private, romantic relationship and force the couple to alter its decision-making process and its movements. The film takes place primarily in a New York (20 years after 9/11) whose landscape has been highly transformed by climate change and sudden deaths due to heart failure. In addition to the 2021 New York, the film also shows a couple other settings including Uganda, where the phenomenon of flying people has started to occur, and also a completely snowed-out landscape that John and Elena stumble upon in the film's final scene. These scenes depict the transformative and catastrophic effects to space and landscape due to extreme weather patterns. The weather

takes on an important role in It's All About Love because it determines the directions that the protagonists take in their flight from the control of Elena's evil family. Alongside Elena's father and like the city corridors of New York, the landscape brought on by the snow storm determines Elena's movement through space. The control of movement that featured so prominently in Dogville and Manderlay is once again manifested in patriarchy, but also in the spaces themselves. In all of the films at hand spaces exercise political power, or political power is rendered spatially.

In Dear Wendy the space of the small town and enclosed community found in Dogville and Manderlay resurfaces. Dear Wendy takes place in a small American mining town where the only career options available to youth seem to be either working in the mine or working at the local grocery store. Like Dogville and Manderlay, the film takes place in a small, enclosed space. The main characters of Dear Wendy are a gang formation of marginalized youth called the Dandies. Originally, the Dandies started out as a pacifist clique who began carrying guns because Dick bought a gun as a gift for Sebastian under the assumption that it was a toy. Upon the discovery that the gun is real, Dick alongside Susan start the Dandies gang in order to boost the confidence of the town's dejected youth. This plan goes awry when they are killed off by drones of uniformed police officers. Of importance to this chapter is how flows of power correspond to flows of movement in Dear Wendy. When the molecular, splinter group of the Dandies are formed they go underground. The shooting range that they set up takes place in an abandoned mine where they are out of view from the town. In this space of the mine the Dandies become new people and adopt personas that join them with their

guns. These changes are reflected in the naming of their guns and the flamboyant costumes that the Dandies wear only while in the mine. The aboveground space of the town is a drab conservative space – a reading reinforced by the flood of blue mining uniforms that contrast with the Dandies' attire. The subterranean space of the mine is a space of rhizomatic transversal and mobility (similar to the "holey space" of Eisenstein's Strike identified by Deleuze and Guattari in A Thousand Plateaus) where the town's youth can express the side of themselves that gets repressed in the town's above-ground space. The space of the mine becomes a revolutionary space of becoming, where the disaffected youth become a pack of revolutionaries, keen on protecting Sebastian's grandmother from intimidation by the town's police. Once again, character movement through space is inextricably linked to power structures. Certain spaces like the town demand a certain conformism on behalf of the minor characters, in that they adhere to the demands of the town's power structure. This plays out in the towns of Dear Wendy and Dogville and in the form of the slave plantation in Manderlay. In Dear Wendy the characters literally go underground in order to counter the micropolitical fascism of the town. In Dogville the mine – like in Dear Wendy – is the only place where Grace is able to hide from her father after she first arrives in town and her father is out searching for her. Both films posit the abandoned mines as a metallurgic space outside of capitalist structures, topographies that function differently from the wider town. In terms of the historical situation that these films implicitly critique, one cannot help but think of the role that space plays in George W. Bush's war on terror, in particular his cowboy/dandy rhetoric of smoking people out of holes. Dear Wendy reverses the demonizing polarity of

this above ground/below ground power structure. We see the youth below as a people to come. We map out oppression from below (oppression that comes from above).

Indeed, the spatial construction of each film relates to Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of smooth, striated, and holey space. The plot descriptions provided aim to describe how the character's movement through the spaces of these films are influenced by (political) powers representative of the father, the state, the Law, and other molar formations. Deleuze and Guattari repeatedly return to space throughout their collaborations, and both have been described as spatial thinkers. The political tensions of these films are expressed spatially so that the conflict between opposing forces in the film gets rendered spatially as well. Deleuze and Guattari's theorizations of smooth, striated, and holey space add a new dimension to the discussion of these films and their configurations of space, a dimension that accounts for the politics of space in these already politically charged films. The politics of space are important for a number of reasons. The political critique of the world's contemporary hegemonic systems includes a critique of the state, capitalism, and patriarchy and how these elements connect to the real-world political situation of the United States during the Bush-Cheney era. Given that this era in American history is marked by both the 9/11 attack and the Iraq War it only makes sense that these films are preoccupied with space and territoriality.

All four of the films at hand consist of a combination of smooth and striated space. Deleuze and Guattari write that "the two spaces in fact exist only in mixture: smooth space is constantly being translated, transversed into a striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space" (A Thousand Plateaus

474). This mixture between smooth and striated space is apparent in these films, and these types of space are brought forth by a unique minor aesthetics, especially in Dogville and Manderlay. These two films depict smooth and striated space a number of ways, all of which self-reflexively acknowledge the deliberate use of contrasting topographies. As previously mentioned, the spaces of Dogville and Manderlay are experimentally composed through a barren, black mise-en-scène that features white markings on the ground to delineate non-existent structures. The juxtaposition inherent in this combination of flat spaces and lines that come together in the settings of Dogville and Manderlay are aestheticized manifestations of smooth and striated space. The blackness that fills the screen of these films is a-signifying material. Non-narrative visual part-signs such as the black and white backgrounds can be conceived of as "a-signifying particles" that "provide lines of escape from the snares of representation" (Genosko, A Critical Introduction 146). The signaletic, as opposed to signifying material corresponds to the smooth spaces of decoded flows that surround the actions and expressions performed in Dogville and Manderlay. The smooth, all-black spaces are then markedly striated by the white markings on the stage. Deleuze and Guattari figure smooth space as a nomadic space and striated space as a sedentary space (A Thousand Plateaus 474). This distinction between the two types of spaces corresponds to their representation in Dogville as Grace, a nomad-like woman without a home, and on the run from her family, emerges from the pitch black smooth space that surrounds Dogville, and then stumbles upon the striated town. Upon her arrival the apparatus of the town immediately alters her movements and actions through spaces. Striated space, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is the space of

the State apparatus and regimented labour (A Thousand Plateaus 474, 490). The conflicts that take place between Grace's nomadic tendencies, her father, and the town of Dogville are conflicts between different types of space. The collar that the town latches to Grace's neck, and the intense scheduling of her labour parallels how the striated space of the town attempts to capture and transform smooth space. As already touched upon, Grace's regimented schedule that the town initiates in order to further her oppression is only made possible through the striated layout of the town that gets emphasized by the film's black and white aesthetics, and is built around centres of power such as Tom's house and the church. The conflict between smooth and striated space accumulates in the film's apocalyptic ending. Grace's order for the henchmen to literally wipe the town off the map is really a momentary victory of smooth over striated space; as all of the town's residents are killed and the town is set ablaze, the striated space gives way to the surrounding blackness.

The struggle between smooth and striated space reappears in the opening shot of Manderlay. The film begins with a map of the United States. The map is a tool of striation par excellence, and was used to conquer the smooth space of the sea (A Thousand Plateaus 479). The opening shot clearly emphasizes the striated space of the nation-state, represented in cartographic form, which contrasts the black, smooth plane of the mise-en-scène. The camera zooms in on the map and, from a bird's eye view, follows the entourage of vehicles crossing state lines before stopping in Alabama, where the film is set. The opening of Manderlay, like the opening of Dogville, sets up the opposition between smooth and striated space, before the drama of the film unfolds, partly around

this very distinction. About halfway through the film, a dust storm enters Manderlay and destroys the plantation's crops. This had never happened under Mam's law, because it prevented the slaves from cutting down the trees. Grace let them use the nearby forest to harvest wood in order to repair their homes, but as a result, the dust storm destroyed the plantation. These events register how the smooth space created by the dust storm that covers Manderlay with sand (so that it somewhat resembles a desert) thwarts Grace's new hold of power in the plantation. Although Grace was led by good-hearted humanist intentions to save the slaves, she ends up maintaining the old master-slave dichotomy. In her attempts at re-configuring the striated space of the plantation, her plans are foiled by the rogue weather patterns that transform the once productive plantation into an un-workable field of sand. Instead of the plantation slaves becoming nomads and giving up their regimented tasks of slavery (and striated space), they remain slaves, but to Grace's humanist liberalism instead of to Mam's Law. The smooth space of the sand storm undercuts the plantation's production, but Grace reinforces the striated space of labour, of the map, and of the text and images on the soundstage floor.

In Vinterberg's It's All About Love smooth space takes on a transcendental character, in sharp contrast to the striated space of futuristic New York City. Inside of the city, the human population is suffering like never before from an unknown heart disease – a clear allusion, given the film's title, to a lack of love that people experience. As death lurks throughout New York – the striated space – John and Elena escape the city, and everything that comes along with it, including Elena's abusive father, the rigours of figure skating performances, surveillance, and Elena's drug habit. C.Claire Thompson argues

that the "central trope of It's All About Love [is] bodies in transit." She continues:

> This is a well-to-do world in which bodies (human and non-human) are constantly hurtling towards and away from each other, and one in which love is felt, sustained and hindered through technologies of communication and transportation, against the backdrop of well-worn geographies of time-space compression. In such cosmopolitan lifeworlds, practices and discourses of love are mapped onto what Whatmore describes as 'topologies of intimacy and affectivity that confound conventional cartographies of distance and proximity, and local and global scales' (Thompson 8).

The striated space of the city where love has become an impossibility exists in antithesis to the smooth snowed-out spaces that appear towards the end of the film, where love becomes a reality for John and Elena, even if it's a tragic reality. This juxtaposition parallels the incompatibility between what Whatmore terms "conventional cartographies" and "topologies of intimacy and affectivity" (Whatmore 162). Affect is a key component of it's All About Love, especially since it is most evident in the smooth spaces of the film, like the conclusion's snowstorm. Deleuze and Guattari identify smooth space as "a space of affects more than one of properties" (A Thousand Plateaus 478). With this in mind, it becomes possible to read John and Elena's escape from striation to smoothness along the narrative axis of the film, which is from divorce to reunification, from singularity to multiplicity, from alienation to affect. Striated space is connected to power whereas smooth space is connected to force, and Dogville, Manderlay and It's All About Love show how power always appears in "diabolical" forms, such as; Americanism, fascism,

and bureaucracy (Deleuze and Guattari, Kafka 64). Force, on the other, accumulates in smooth spaces that attract bodies in transit, fleeing from the stifling enclosure of striated space. The valorization of the smooth space is at once an alignment with minor political spaces that resist the dominant hegemonic powers in the films and their allegorical counterparts in the real-world institutions of Integrated World Capitalism.

As already mentioned, Dear Wendy adds a new component to the smooth/striated space binary – that of holey space (A Thousand Plateaus 413). The mine in the film plays a crucial role in the molecular formation of the Dandies who violently confront the powers that haunt their town. Kenneth Surin discusses the concept of holey space in his article "*Delire* Is World Historical": Political Knowledge in Capitalism and Schizophrenia." Surin argues for the potential of rhizomatic politics to dispense with ruling notions of society (134). The space of the mine in Dear Wendy allows for rhizomatic political formations to take place – formations that are not hinged to repressive societal obligations of stable, heteronormative gender identity. Since the dwellers of holey space are free from such obligations, it follows, as Surin points out, that people yet to come are dwellers of holey space (Surin 139). The political formation of the Dandies that emerges from the hole of the mine are incomprehensible to the town residents, who have no idea that such a subaltern formation exists, let alone that it challenges the police's authority over the town. Unlike the process of constantly mixing and passing between one another, as in the case of smooth and striated space, holey space seems to offer a rhizomatic bypass to evade the perpetual struggles of re- and deterritorialization. The space of the mine also offers a chance to re-work the

metallurgical connections to the outside world. Dear Wendy is primarily about guns and gun culture, and the polarity between the above-ground culture of the gun and the underground subculture of the gun. Above ground, the gun is a consumer item (first seen in a shop window) and a means of state repression. In the mine, a utopian holey space, the gun becomes a key to lost histories waiting to be recovered, as each Dandy aims to discover the past of his or her gun, and the reasons behind his or her oppression. The gun also becomes a transformative force, capable of dislodging the deep-seeded personal identities of the town in favour of a new identity based on a molecular group formation. Dear Wendy suggests that even in the most repressive of striated spaces, like the small town where molecular fascisms spread like cancer, a mine may provide the necessary refuge, and space filled with potential for molecular becomings that can subvert the fascisms above. However, Dear Wendy also exhibits the opposing permutations of holey space that David Jenemann notices and Deleuze and Guattari allude to: the blocking of utopian revolution in connection with smooth space, and "a one-way conduit leading directly back to the bourgeois state" in conjunction with striated space (Jenemann 93; A Thousand Plateaus 414). Though the holey space of the mine in Dear Wendy connects to the striated space of the town, it burrows out a connection to utopian smooth space to the point that the Dandies' raison d'être is to smooth out the striations by overthrowing its power structure. Holey space in Dear Wendy and smooth spaces in Dogville, Manderlay, and It's All About Love function as a space where molecular groups, affects, and becomings form in opposition to the Cartesian logic of striated space, incongruent with the political topologies necessary to combat the diabolical powers of Integrated World

Capitalism. But Deleuze and Guattari send a clear warning at the end of the chapter on smooth and striated space. They write:

> Movements, speed and slowness, are sometimes enough to reconstruct a notion of smooth space. Of course, smooth spaces are not in themselves liberatory. But the struggle is changed or displaced in them, and life reconstitutes its stakes, confronts new obstacles, invents new places, switches adversaries. Never believe that smooth space will suffice to save us" (A Thousand Plateaus 500).

Since smooth space is more of a precursor to revolutionary actions than revolutionary in and of itself, it remains important to account for how these films link the politics of space that get represented to the spatial and economic alienation of Integrated World Capitalism.

In Thomas Elsaesser's analysis of Dogville in the book European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood he invokes Fredric Jameson's concept of cognitive mapping. Elsaesser argues that in Dogville

> space is doubly occupied, insofar as the spectator is forced to superimpose not so much a 'realistic' decor on the bare planks, but a different cognitive mapping of what constitutes inside and out, exclusion and inclusion, and even to ponder how an act of inclusion and co-option can be a form of exclusion, if the other's singularity is covered or occupied by fantasy projections (Elsaesser 123).

Elsaesser connects issues of space to the politics of determining the boundary between inclusivity and exclusivity since he recognizes that certain types of space privilege certain types of power. Striated space, for example, privileges the power of the patriarch, of the

state, and of disciplined labour – all major preoccupations of the film. Since space is connected to power, and power often hinges on certain types of space, it is useful to analyze how Dogville and the other films invite a cognitive mapping that recognizes the spatial dimension of alienation. In commenting on Deleuze, and justifying the need for cognitive mapping, Jameson writes:

> If fantasy is epistemological, as Deleuze has argued in Anti-Oedipus, indeed if narrative is itself a form of cognition, then an obvious next step lies in the systematic harnessing of the energies of those hitherto irrational activities for cognitive purposes. The conception of cognitive mapping I have proposed elsewhere was intended to include that possibility as well, and be prescriptive as well as descriptive. The idea has, at least on my view, the advantage of involving concrete content (imperialism, the world system, subalternity, dependency and hegemony), while necessarily involving a program of formal analysis of a new kind (since it is centrally defined by the dilemma of representation itself). (The Geopolitical Aesthetic 188)

Jameson's concept of cognitive mapping stems from Althusser's definition of ideology as the representation of a subject's Imaginary relationship to his or her Real conditions of existence and Kevin Lynch's idea of the alienated city, a space that people are unable to map in their minds. Jameson finds a synchronicity between these concepts, as they converge in cognitive mapping to "enable a situational representation on the part of the individual subject to that vaster and properly unrepresentable totality which is the ensemble of society's structures as a whole" (Postmodernism 51). Jameson elaborates on

the theory when he writes that "the mental map of city space explored by Lynch can be extrapolated to that mental map of the social and global totality we all carry around in our heads in variously garbled forms" (Cognitive Mapping 353). Both Althusser's definition of ideology and Lynch's conception of the city prominently rest upon the central Marxist concept of alienation, and Jameson explores how the problem of alienation can be aesthetically resolved, or at least addressed in the globalized world.

Arguably, the main dilemma of cognitive mapping is how to map one's place in the world, not necessarily geographically, but cognitively, since given the increasingly complex stratification of the world system, figuring such a map is no easy task. As a whole, Jameson is quite abstract in defining the concept, and resists providing any concrete, aesthetic examples in the numerous instances in which he writes about cognitive mapping. Even the image of the map does not necessarily constitute a form of *cognitive* mapping. In a direct assessment of maps themselves in relation to cognitive mapping, Jameson writes:

> [C]ognitive mapping cannot (at least in our time) involve anything so easy as a map; indeed, once you knew what 'cognitive mapping' was driving at, you were to dismiss all figures of maps and mapping from your mind and try to imagine something else. But it may be more desirable to take a genealogical approach and show how mapping has ceased to be achievable by means of maps themselves (Postmodernism 410).

The films at hand take off on the assumption that Jameson makes here, that the map itself has become insufficient for the totalizing project of mapping. In Dear Wendy any printed

map of the town would prove insufficient in truly mapping the town, since the subterranean space of the abandoned mine that the Dandies take over, complete with its rhizomatic underground pathways, proves unmappable because it is not recognized by the authorities who remain unaware of the holey space.

Vinterberg's It's All About Love is set in the type of metropolis that Lynch has in mind when he talks of the alienated city. The film certainly conveys the sense of alienation, given that people are dying from a lack of love. In geographic terms, the film unfolds around a couple's attempts to come to terms with their surroundings, because in the urban centres of Integrated World Capitalism, things are not as they seem – a line that doubles as a catch phrase in the film's trailer. Friends and family are enemies, exes are lovers, people are actually clones, and it snows in the summer. In many ways, the character Marciello (John's brother played by Sean Penn) attempts to cognitively map the world (or, the universe – Jameson's theory is unabashedly totalizing). Throughout the film, he flies over the world in an airplane, taking notes and recording his thoughts on the state of the world. Potentially, it is his aerial perspective of the earth (similar to the high-angle shot that begins both Dogville and Manderlay) that contributes to his conclusion that "it's all about love." John and Elena who stay grounded on the other hand, end up lost in a snowstorm, unable to decipher their location, direction or even their ultimate destination. Their final retreat to the smooth space of the snow marks their only way out of the unmappable, labyrinthine city of infinite pathways.

While the opening of Manderlay invokes an image of the map, the other films maintain a more tenuous relationship to mapping itself. Dogville's juxtaposition between

the forces of smooth and striated space seem to illustrate a tension at the heart of map-making, without directly depicting a map. Grace's movements through space can be read as allegorical for her discovery of patriarchal oppression outside of the realm of her father. On an extra-diegetic level, the film appropriates characters and situations emblematic of Integrated World Capitalism's political power from outside the film world, and maps these figures onto diegetic space. In doing so, Dogville, and in many ways the other three films as well, visualizes power so that it corresponds to a wider political situation. By looking at the positioning of power in these films, the spectator can better visualize their alienation under capitalism, and act on this new perspective of one's position in relation to the economic, cultural, political and historical flows of the world. Only through Grace's movement through the town can she, and the spectator, fully realize its loci of power and how they correspond to the pockets of power formed by the accumulation of capital and molecular fascisms in the alienated spaces of cities and towns.

Dogville, Manderlay, It's All About Love, and Dear Wendy all offer different visions of America, yet their approaches share the common representation of America as a fantasy dystopia. In A.O. Scott's review of Dogville in the New York Times, he notes that the film resulted in charges of anti-Americanism directed at von Trier, before he puts forth one of the very reasons why Dogville (along with the other three films), can sidestep this critique despite their overt criticism of the United States. Scott writes:

> 'Dogville' belongs in the company of other European dreams about America -- Kafka's "Amerika," of course, but also Bertolt Brecht's plays set among the

> gangsters of Chicago and films like Wim Wenders's 'Paris, Texas' and Michelangelo Antonioni's 'Zabriskie Point.' To call these various works dreams is to caution against taking them too literally, and also to suggest that they may be most interesting for what they reveal about the dreamers.

Not only are these films "European dreams" about America, they are simultaneously dreams about Europe as well. In defence of von Trier against the accusation of anti-Americanism, Elsaesser notes that "as Von Trier himself pointed out, the film was made under the impact of the 2001 Danish elections, when a right-wing anti-immigrant party won 24 percent of the popular vote, obliging the mainstream center parties to come to an agreement with the populist right" (Elsaesser 123). The connection that Elsaesser makes between Dogville and the Danish political climate suggests that the critiques of political power structures put forth by these four films are not limited to the geographic region of the United States. In fact, the war in Iraq dominates the historical context that surrounds the production and release of these films, which can all be read in one way or another as critical of the war and the "American" values that made such a war possible. Denmark was a member of the "coalition of the willing" so these films' critique of Americanism during the Bush-Cheney years is not without a strong sense of self-reflection. In the age of Empire, "quintessentially American" issues are global issues, and these films draw attention to the growing interconnectivity, and interdependence of America and European states like Denmark. The representation of spaces in these films, each in their own way, hints at a strong reflexive statement on Danish and international politics, which American has greatly influenced.

In Cinema 2 Deleuze conceives of the "any-space-whatever" as a spatial characteristic of Italian neorealism, to describe "dehumanized landscapes, of emptied spaces that might be seen as having absorbed characters and actions" (Cinema 2, 5). Though Deleuze uses the term to describe the "disconnected, or emptied" spaces of post-war Europe, Dogville, Manderlay, It's All About Love and Dear Wendy are set in what could be described as any-space-whatevers. All four films feature "spaces where people no longer know how to react to their situation," a key component of any-space-whatevers (Sutton and Martin-Jones 97). Though each film foregrounds its American setting, the spaces themselves take on a spatial and temporal ambiguity that unhinges them from any concrete locality. The town in Dear Wendy is deliberately left nameless and timeless. The town of Dogville and the plantation of Manderlay are fictional, and the films' aesthetics foreground their constructedness and artificiality. The potential for deterritorializtion is apparent in the pared-down set, absent of any visible buildings, perhaps reminiscent of the knocked down walls of post-war European cinema that initiated Deleuze's theorization of "any-space-whatevers". And finally, It's All About Love's New York is set in 2021, an indeterminate space because it does not yet exist. Dehumanized spaces also populate It's All About Love as people are chronically suffering from sudden death and their dead bodies litter the landscape. The film also features spaces that could be anywhere, such as the airport, the airplane, and the snowstorm, none of which are intrinsically recognizable as belonging to a specific territory or nation. All of these filmic spaces are situated in America, but lack the believability of an actual American locale; they exist more convincingly in a European fantasy space about America. Since the towns

could potentially exist anywhere, their indeterminacy suggests that the films' political critiques can also be extended well beyond American borders and American issues. Von Trier and Vinterberg's films beg to be read in relation to their respective historical period, with the rise of right-wing populism in Denmark, the increasing spread of globalization and intensity of capitalist domination, and the War in Iraq. Such historical markers take shape in the films and the connection between space and power – or exclusion from it – encourage a cognitive mapping of political and ideological topologies. The films at hand imagine the space of America as a space of urgent European concern, and vice-versa. Whether smooth, striated, holey, or whatever, spaces in these films invite a cognitive mapping that locates political power and alienation both inside and outside of the filmic world.

Chapter Four: The Politics of Film Language and Film Dialogue

Much of the scholarship on minor cinema grows out of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of minor language as articulated in their book on Kafka and minor literature and their treatise A Thousand Plateaus. It's All About Love, Dogville, Manderlay, and Dear Wendy are variations of linguistic assemblages that draw from stratified enunciations that cut across national film cultures and normative uses of both dialogue and film form. Representations of language proper exist in the films themselves through dialogue and written text, and the films are also composed of filmic language. These films are assemblages of language proper in the form of dialogue and text, and also film language or film grammar that constitutes the intelligibility of the filmic images (or semantics) through syntactic organization and structure. Both of these types of language are inherently political and each of the four films by von Trier and Vinterberg overtly politicize the linguistic assemblages in their films. These variations on the English-language dialogue and Hollywood film grammar (including its co-dependent sets of visuals and narrative structures) distinguish the films at hand from actual Hollywood fare, and these marked uses of language accentuate the political motivations of the films. Unlike Hollywood films that can only advance political issues from within a pre-existing structure of enunciation that is Hollywood film style, the films at hand call the very logic of this rigid structure of film language into question, just like the myths of American nationalism that perpetuate the violent, neo-imperialist American foreign policy of the Bush-Cheney era. The von Trier and Vinterberg films figure an abusive, machinic breakdown of dominant cinema's *language* through film styles, structures, and dialogue

that engage in becoming-minor.

Language is of utmost importance to von Trier and Vinterberg's films for a number of reasons emphasized by the films themselves, but also raised by the transnational context of the films' production, distribution, and thematics. The films are directed by Danish directors and funded by European capital, yet feature American, English-speaking actors and deal with quintessential American themes. Language is of vital importance to a political reading of these films because both spoken language and film language condense the larger transnational relationships at work in these films. Sarah Kozloff stresses the centrality of film dialogue to the ideological conditions of American cinema. She writes: "[F]ilm dialogue is important to American culture. Speech is not some abstract, neutral communicative code: issues of power and dominance, of empathy and intimacy, of class, ethnicity, and gender are automatically engaged every time someone opens his or her mouth. What the characters say, how they say it, and how the filmgoer is influenced are crucial issues" (Kozloff 26). John Dewey also stresses the inherently political nature of language because language does not exist in a vacuum. Dewey argues that "[l]anguage is specifically a mode of interaction of at least two beings, a speaker and a hearer; it presupposes an organized group to which these creatures belong and from whom they have acquired their habits of speech. It is therefore a relationship" (Dewey 145). Of most importance here is that language is inherently a collective phenomenon, whether it be film dialogue, speech, or a more all-encompassing notion of film style that takes into consideration the communicative function of mise-en-scène, editing, and cinematography. The collective is an essential component of Deleuze and

Guattari's minor literature and cinema, and therefore a focus on language allows for a notion of collectivity to emerge, despite these films' refusal to be categorized through conservative reterritorializations of collective subjectivity based on a nationalist, ethnic, or gendered identity politics. Film style is just as important to study when dealing with either representations of language in film, or film language "[b]ecause a style is not an individual psychological creation but an assemblage of enunciation, it unavoidably produces a language within a language" (Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus 97). Dogville, Manderlay, It's All About Love and Dear Wendy are self-conscious of the importance of the politics of language and deliberately inflect English, English-speaking actors, and Hollywood film style – a de facto 'universal' language – through strategies of reappropriation through aesthetic innovation and the deconstruction of the hierarchies of power embedded in "accent-free" or naturalized dialogue and film form. The films at hand bring out the accent in the accent-free language of Hollywood film style by making it strange, pushing it to its limits, and making the language stutter. Vinterberg and von Trier are strangers to Hollywood film style and the English language, and according to Deleuze "a great writer is always a stranger in the language in which he expresses himself" and he "*stutters in the language system*: he causes language as such to stutter"[27] (Deleuze, He Stuttered 24-25). Given the inherently collective nature of language, and by extension, film style, the machinic breakdown of Hollywood film grammar that takes

[27] In a little-cited interview, Deleuze provides a concrete example of this stammering effect through comments on Godard. Deleuze says: "It's as though, in a way, [Godard]'s always stammering. Not stammering in his words, but stammering in language itself. You can normally only be a foreigner in another language. But here it's a case of being a foreigner in one's own language. Proust said that fine books have to be written in a sort of foreign language. It's the same with Godard's programs; he's even perfected his Swiss accent to precisely this effect. It's this creative stammering, this solitude, which makes Godard a force" (Negotiations 37,38)

place in these films enables a critique of how the American mythology embedded in these representational mediums (language/film-language) produces standardized subjectivity that serves the interests of Integrated World Capitalism[28].

For Mette Hjort, Danish cinema is a minor cinema in large part because of the Danish language, which has very little marketability outside of Denmark itself, and whose international influence pales in comparison to English-language cinema, or Hollywood. The economic and cultural challenges facing Danish-language films are symptomatic of a small nation's relationship to the Anglicized forces of globalization. Hjort's discussions of "New Danish Cinema" touch on the politics of language in relation to von Trier and Vinterberg, as they are both key figures of the New Danish Cinema whose works spans both Danish and English. Hjort rightly points out that "[t]he effects...of cultural marginalization due to dependence on or commitment to a minor tongue may not be as far reaching as those of unambiguous political domination, but they too can take on a 'structural character'" (Hjort Small Nation 30), and the films at hand explicitly contest the established structural character of political subordination attributed to the hegemony of (film) language. A number of Danish films use English-language dialogue for commercial interests in order broaden their international appeal such as Fear X (Refn 2003), a film that, like It's All About Love, also uses American stars (ie. John Turturro). The use of English raises the question of what constitutes a Danish film. There

[28] Félix Guattari writes extensively on 'processes of subjectivation' or 'singularization' in Molecular Revolution in Brazil. "IWC asserts itself through a double oppression in modalities that vary according to the country or social stratum. First, by direct repression, both economic and social – controlling the production of goods and social relations through external material coercion and the suggestion of meaning. The second oppression, perhaps greater than the first in intensity, consists in the installation of IWC in the very production of subjectivity: *an immense machine producing a subjectivity standardized on a world scale has become a basic element in the formation of collective labour power and the force for collective social control.* (Guattari and Rolnik 53)

are a plurality of definitions that could be used, but the legal definition follows:

> According to the law, a film is Danish if it qualifies for financial support from the state-funded Danish Film Institute. ... [A] feature-length film is Danish if at least 25 percent of its actors and technical crew are Danish... [E]ligibility for financial backing in no way depends on use of the Danish language or on the film's being shot in Denmark. Curiously, then, films directed by other nationals outside Denmark are potentially Danish. Although the legal definition of Danish film grows out of a concern to support a national culture, it remains largely indifferent to the linguistic and territorial factors associated with concepts of nationhood (Hjort, Danish Cinema 534).

According to this legal definition, each of the four films being discussed qualify as Danish despite their gravitation towards American cinema, culture and language. Danish law is not very important to a politicized reading of these films, but it does illuminate how Danish society tolerates the funding of English-language filmmaking for both artistic and commercial reasons.

Lars von Trier has often worked in English for overtly political reasons, such as being able to weave aspects of Americana and Hollywood into the sonic planes of his films that are in turn inflected with experimental aesthetics. In The Element of Crime and Europa, English is used to invoke the narration of classic noir films that the film renegotiates visually, narratively and aurally. Dancer in the Dark also uses English to align the film with another great American genre – the musical – which is reworked to the point of ending with a startling death penalty scene. For von Trier, working in English

has not only economic benefits but serves an inherently artistic function as well. The bilingualism of von Trier's and Vinterberg's films, and Danish film culture more generally, also reflects how Danish filmmakers face economic and cultural obstacles which make it difficult to work in their native tongue despite state funding because the prospects of reaching a significant global audience are infinitely higher for an English-language film. Hjort writes: "International publics are frequently intensely monolingual, with participation hinging on fluency in the tongue favoured by the dominant culture. Whereas members of minor cultures must be multilingual if they are to be part of an international public, members of major cultures need only rely on their mother tongues" (Hjort, Danish Cinema 522). Though speaking multiple languages can be advantageous, the multilingualism of Danish cinema and its spectators reflects a subordinate position in the hierarchy of global cinema languages.

The oscillating use of English and Danish in the films of von Trier and Vinterberg exemplify the contemporary trend that began in the 90s by Danish filmmakers and policymakers "to gravitate towards a series of initiatives that have effectively combined to *denationalize*, to *hybridize*, but also to *globalize* the relevant minor cinema" (Hjort, Small Nation xi). The denationalization of Danish cinema is found in von Trier and Vinterberg's films as they embrace transnational themes, and question the validity of closed national identities and myths, in part through a politicization of film dialogue and film language. Mette Hjort posits a minor enunciation as "capable of subverting the dominant language of culture of a given nation state" (Hjort, Danish Cinema 521) and Dogville, Manderlay, It's All About Love, and Dear Wendy all use language to subvert

the dominant ideology of Bush-Cheney America as formed by the politics of representation in the period's Hollywood films. Each of these films exist in a minor relationship to Hollywood cinema not only because of their small nation status, but more so because of their refusal to imbue their criticism of the United States with a Danish or European nationalism – and their outright rejection of nationalism. Hjort notes that that von Trier, for example "demonstrates little or no attachment to Danish culture in films such as The Element of Crime and Europa" (Danish Cinema 528) and this observation can be extended to include Dogville and Manderlay. The different uses of English in von Trier's films allow for a criticism of the joint military and cultural imperialism of the United States and Hollywood without valorizing the same imperialist tendencies that can be found in Danish governmental policies. The varied uses of language in these films effectively undercut the power of the nation-state that stems from the conjunction of myth, narration, and film grammar to normalize and naturalize highly constructed political language used to advance a neo-imperialist agenda.

The von Trier and Vinterberg films discussed in this thesis representationally engage with the transnational context that surrounds the climate of their production and distribution. Their representation and negotiation of transnational tensions provokes a reconsideration of their relationship to Hamid Naficy's concept of accented cinema, which Naficy has described as a form of minor cinema (Naficy 26). Naficy is largely concerned with the modes of production and representation characteristic of Third World or postcolonial filmmakers whose output bears an aesthetic "accent" that provides ideological, aesthetic, and narrative alternatives to Hollywood cinema. Naficy focuses on

exilic, ethnic, and diasporic filmmakers so as not to limit his discussion solely to filmmakers from specific regions of the world that have been most severely affected by colonialism. Though von Trier and Vinterberg are not by any means exilic, ethnic or diasporic filmmakers, and thus do not fit into the accented paradigm set out by Naficy, his theorization of accented filmmaking is useful in considering the political implications of interrelated co-existence of spoken language and film grammar.

According to Naficy, film style is inherently political precisely because it is a form of collective enunciation in the Deleuzo-Guattarian sense of the term, and is therefore inseparable from the politics of dominance and subordination that characterizes the hegemony of languages. Naficy argues that "the accented style continually grapples with the politicized immediacy of the films and with their collective enunciation and reception – that is, with the manner in which politics infuses all aspects of their existence" (Naficy 6). So while accented films are not necessarily oppositional, they are political enunciations whose "inflected style" (Naficy 22) can be opposed to Hollywood as emblematic of "accent-free" filmmaking (Naficy 23). This unaccented/accented dichotomy that exists between Hollywood and *othered* cinemas provides a framework through which the inflected style of films by von Trier and Vinterberg can be considered as inherently political, despite not being produced by exilic, ethnic, or diasporic filmmakers. Naficy argues, using the example of Atom Egoyan's Calendar (1993) that the accented style forces "the dominant cinema to speak in a minoritarian dialect" (Naficy 25). Vinterberg and von Trier's films certainly do not constitute an accented cinema in Naficy's terms because of their emergence from state-subsidized "art" or "Second"

Cinema, yet I would argue that the films at hand "abusively" inflect dominant Hollywood cinema, and these inflections constitute minor enunciations that politically align themselves in solidarity with global fronts of resistance to the expansion of Empire.

The notion of an "abusive" translation stems from Abé Mark Nornes study of subtitles Cinema Babel: Translating Global Cinema. Though this book is mainly concerned with the politics of translation in the cinema, and subtitling practices in particular, the term can be productively used in a variety of contexts. I will use the term in my analysis of the Vinterberg and von Trier films' use of dialogue in this chapter. Nornes is preoccupied with (predominantly Japanese) films that go through a process of translation into English through subtitling that can either obscure the translation process (constituting what Nornes terms corrupt subtitling practice) or use subtitling as a creative intervention that allows reception possibilities to proliferate (Nornes 10). Nornes posits that "we may position abusive subtitling as a critique of dominant ideology. However, it does not amount to a simple experimentation designed to block ideological interpellation through distanciation techniques" (Nornes 179). The reason why abusive subtitling does not simply express a 'Brechtian' form of distanciation for Nornes is because it maintains a level of fidelity to the original text, but nonetheless, the practice aims to disrupt representational and spectatorial conventions. Nornes concludes: "Thus, 'abuse' is directed at convention, even at spectators and their expectations. And when abusive subtitling becomes normalized, we will think of other terms – or simply drop the adjective" (187). The term "abusive" (used to describe untranslated dialogue, footnotes in subtitles, etc. which provoke the spectator to produce meaning, not simply consume

meaning) connotes a disruptive, non-normative, or defamiliarizing language, apparent in Dogville and It's All About Love. The abusive use of Hollywood film language and English by the Dogme brothers is also fitting in a transnational context where directors work in their second language.

There are two minor strategies that the films at hand use to render criticism of America (and nationalism more generally) that relate to this theorization of film dialogue and language: displacement of a dominant (film) language through transposition to an avant-garde milieu, and infiltration through a molecular politicization of dominant (film) language from within its semantic parameters and syntactical structures. The first strategy of displacement is characterized by Dogville and Manderlay, whereas the second strategy of infiltration appears in It's All About Love and Dear Wendy.

Dogville and Manderlay foreground aspects of Hollywood film language, such as first-person narration, literary inspiration, and theatrical logic only to then wrestle these traits from their place in Hollywood film grammar and displace them amidst an avant-garde mise-en-scène and political sensibility. Dialogue in the Hollywood paradigm functions in conjunction with film style to create a unified, coherent world based on institutionally entrenched notions of intelligibility. In a chapter on dialogue in Classical Hollywood Cinema, Sean Cubitt argues that the diegetic filmic world is predicated on a notion of fullness and presence. He writes:

> Matching recorded dialogue to lip-movements, sound effects to their apparent causes, is intended to give an audience the most powerful possible illusion of the 'real' presence of the characters, or possibly the stars who play them. It is also the

> guarantee of the fullness of the filmic world, persuading us of the completeness and coherence of the fiction. And finally, it fulfills the fantastic desire of audiences to enter into that world as transcendental subjects, given, for the duration, a subjective position rendered absolute in its synchronization with the married sound and image (Cubitt 167).

Classical Hollywood Cinema's production of a transcendental subjectivity is based on the same dualist logic of modern sovereignty (Hardt and Negri, Empire 328), as the transcendental apparatus "maintains effects of domination" and "impose[s] order on the multitude [to] prevent it from organizing itself spontaneously and expressing its creativity autonomously" (Hardt and Negri, Empire 83). In Dogville and Manderlay the illusion of false presence and completeness characteristic of Hollywood cinema is done away with in favour of a deliberately Brechtian aesthetic that flaunts the films' own constructedness.

For example, as mentioned in chapter three, the films feature blacked out/whited out backgrounds, a self-reflexive chapter structure, complete with title cards indicating a chapter, ironic voiceover narration, and a stripped down set that undercuts Hollywood-style realism, since there are no walls, doors, etc. The Brechtian influence apparent in the mise-en-scène of these two films demonstrates their refusal to adhere to the aesthetic of fullness and presence that can be found in much of commercial narrative cinema predicated on illusionism. The blacked-out soundstage with a stripped down set consisting only of basic costumes, props, and chalk markings constitutes an assemblage of filmic elements that mark an extreme variation on the norms of Hollywood film language and its intelligibility.[29] The contrast between the foreground and background

[29] As discussed later in this chapter, the extreme use of language, in addition to a play on intensities, is

displaces imagery often linked to costume melodramas from their usual surroundings and places them into a setting that refuses to provide a Hollywood-realist aesthetic that would attempt to naturalize the mechanisms of film grammar at work. A similar displacement of Hollywood conventions takes place on the level of the films' narrative structure. Both Dogville and Manderlay follow a deliberately foregrounded chapter structure that emphasizes classical cinema's indebtedness and dependence on its literary roots. Each of the titled chapters in these films are read aloud by John Hurt in a British accent that sounds as if the story is being read from a Dickens novel, so that the film adopts a tone that parodies a (literally) major voice that so often dominates Hollywood film through voice-of-God narration that dictates the surface meaning of the film. The films critique Hollywood narrative structure and its accompanying narration through a use of irony that captures the disjuncture between the mode of narration and the scenarios that are actually depicted. For example, in a manner almost reminiscent of New German Cinema (ie. Fassbinder's Berlin Alexanderplatz), Hurt 'objectively' relays narrative information that is contrasted with explicitly violent scenes. His calm narration accompanies a scene where the dog collar and weighted chain is fastened to Grace's neck in Dogville, and this same emotionless narration accompanies Grace's eventual extermination of the entire town. Hurt speaks these lines of dialogue that would in no way suggest the severity of the action just about to take place: "And then Bill, who had lately improved his engineering skill to an astonishing degree had by way of his first design implemented a kind of escape prevention mechanism. Beautiful it might not have been, but effective he dared say it was." Another example of Hurt's narration that also seems to contradict on-screen content

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one characteristic of a minor literature (Kafka 23).

occurs prior to the execution scene. Hurt's narrative voice speaks of humanity, while on-screen Grace orders the slaughter of the town's inhabitants: "No, what they had done was not good enough, and if one had the power to put it to rights, it was one's duty to do so for the sake of other towns. For the sake of humanity. And not least, for the sake of the human being that was Grace herself." The high-society reasoning of Hurt's narration justifies violence, actually shows how humanist rhetoric can actually be used to justify violent atrocities (as was the case in America at the time of the film's release). These films challenge the notion that narrative conventions entrenched in the classical cinema paradigm (such as first-person, or voice-of-God narration) can adequately or accurately represent on-screen, or real-life scenarios.

The disjuncture between the tone of the film and the tone of the narrator is mirrored in the disconnect between the films' characters and their actions. For instance, the characters of Dogville speak in a lyrical, high-minded literary tone but then commit heinous acts that seems completely out of context with their refined tongues. Thomas Edison, the central male protagonist of Dogville muses philosophically and postures as a writer, but has never written a page. Tom frequently uses well-phrased, high society speech to excuse the violence that the town inflicts upon Grace. Towards the end of the film, when chained-down Grace is resting in bed after a day of slave labour, Tom says to her: "Just don't be hateful. Don't be reproving. If anybody can do it Grace, you can. They will all realize that this web of misunderstanding and injustice has only one true victim and that's you. From there it is only one small step to forgiveness." At the film's climax, Grace's instructs her father's gangsters to kill Martha's children, in a quiet sober tone that

is completely out of step with the content of the demand. Grace says: "There is a family with kids. Do the kids first and make the mother watch. Tell her you'll stop if she can hold back her tears. I owe her that. I'm afraid she cries a little too easily." A similar disjuncture permeates Manderlay, where the most verbally eloquent slave on the plantation Timothy, ends up being a deceitful thief, and Wilhelm, who at first seemed to be the most kind and compassionate of all the slaves, turns out to be their very oppressor, the one who wrote "Mam's law" inscribing each slave as a certain derogatory "type." One scene in particular in which Timothy speaks to Grace illuminates the complex politics of language at work in Manderlay. Speaking in a fictional "Munsi" accent, which supposedly connotes his royal African ancestry, Timothy intelligently and persuasively vocalizes the racial and class-based context of Grace's liberal pretensions: "Let me tell you one thing too. You've got fine words, a posse of gangsters and your white skin. Something folks here seem to fall for, but I 'aint fooled. You're not interested in us, not as human beings. After all, it's tough telling people apart when they are from another race." But as the film later reveals, Timothy is not really a noble "Munsi"with the best interests of his slave community at heart. In fact, he steals the money they made from the cotton harvest. Additionally, Grace and Timothy end up having sex, so his verbal hostility towards her is contradicted by his actions. His speech to Grace disguises his attraction to her, and his "Munsi" accent which connotes a strict moral code obscures his penchant for gambling. Words and actions in these films are unmistakably mismatched, and while this mismatch does not come from an interventionist subtitling, it can certainly be considered abusive in the spirit of Norne's term, because the presentational, theatrical dialogue is

foregrounded and thus de-naturalized, allowing meanings to proliferate in the space opened by this transnational gap. These two films analyzed above effectively displace classical narrative structures and defamiliarize Hollywood verbal enunciations, since the directors no longer have a vested ideological interest in preserving the literary roots of narrative cinema (rather, they spoof its literary roots).

The dominance of formulaic narratives in Hollywood cinema perpetuate a political climate wherein national myths circulate at ease. Dogville and Manderlay's critique of literary-based narration is tied to a critique of nationalist master narratives that can be found in a number of films during the Bush-Cheney era, and are often invoked by politicians and news media outlets in order to justify a neo-imperialist agenda. In Empire, Hardt and Negri write: "[T]he imperial machine, far from eliminating master narratives, actually produces and reproduces them (ideological master narratives in particular) in order to validate and celebrate its own power" (Hardt and Negri 34). In Dogville and Manderlay, John Hurt's narration, and the chapter structure that the films follow are made to appear completely out of place in order to demystify the ideological investments in authoritative narrative structures that allow for the naturalized valorization of a transcendental nation-state and its accompanying values. Ultimately, both films invoke the narrative strategies of classical cinema in order to push them to their limits; and once the threshold is passed, the illusionism of classical cinema gives way to a dialectical meditation on the assembling and construction of film language. Or as Deleuze and Guattari argue with respect to minor literature, "[l]anguage stops being representative in order to now move towards its extremities or its limits" (Deleuze and Guattari, Kafka 23).

Dogville and Manderlay argue that a film language based on absolutes (absolute knowledge, absolute transcendence, absolute closure) is only absolute insofar as it corroborates absolute accounts of national mythology. These films move beyond these self-imposed limits of classical cinema to thrive alongside the other formally inventive films in von Trier's oeuvre that defy absolutism of film language that allies itself with nationalist rhetoric (of any nation-state).

Film style and spoken dialogue are also of utmost importance to the political critique of It's All About Love and Dear Wendy. These films by Thomas Vinterberg follow a different strategy than the previously discussed von Trier films, in that from a visual standpoint they appear to conform quite closely with both dominant film style and narrative structure. These two films have received very little attention from film scholars, audiences, and critics alike, possibly because the seemingly conformist aesthetics of these films does not readily open themselves to an overtly political reading. However, the close proximity of these films to styles and structures found in dominant commercial cinema should not be allowed to occlude the minor sensibility of these films. Deleuze and Guattari even argue that "the more a language has or acquires the characteristics of a major language, the more it is affected by continuous variations that transpose it into a 'minor language'" (A Thousand Plateaus 102). They continue: "'Major and 'minor' do not qualify two different languages but rather two usages of functions of language" (Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus 104). Therefore the similarities that It's All About Love and Dear Wendy share with majoritarian cinema can actually function to play a major language in a minor key, and a radically oppositional aesthetic is not necessary in

order to constitute minor cinema. These two films can be seen as taking up a strategy of 'infiltration' whereby they display a majoritarian veneer in order to then subvert it from within, making the film language – and the dialogue it heavily depends on – stutter, as it is pushed beyond its limits.

Aesthetically, It's All About Love looks more like a glossy Hollywood production than either of the three other films being discussed. Despite its seeming conformism on the level of visuals, the film, more than any of the others, expresses the political nature of dialogue, and the extent to which commercial English-language cinema glosses over the nuances of language by resorting to stereotypes about characters who speak in accented dialogue. The film's non-adherence to the Hollywood convention that accents be consistent, even if not entirely realistic, leads to its larger questioning of the dominant role of English-language cinema in global film cultures.

One of the many differences between It's All About Love and a Hollywood film that doesn't quite "work" is that It's All About Love is conscious of its divergences from Hollywood expectations, as the film depicts the malfunctioning and misfiring of Hollywood codes with regards to the film's (mis)use of language, specifically its accented English. John (Joaquin Phoenix) is a professor of Polish literature, and Elena (Claire Danes) is a Polish figure skater. The narrative briefly suggests that both characters are actually from Poland. Elena apparently left Poland to pursue her career as an international figure skating star. John also seems to be in transit quite a bit and he is first introduced when on a visit to a university in Calgary. Regardless, their "Polish" accents tend to come and go throughout the film, and their accents – when they are being used – sound more

Russian than Polish. There seems to be a general confusion between the two countries in general, as in one point in the film John and Elena attempt to escape to Moscow and at another point John makes reference to his childhood dog named "Igor" – a name, like Elena, much more common in Russia than Poland. This occurs during a sequence when John and Elena are introduced to Elena's clones and the clones, each accompanied by a personal translator express interest in John and Elena's past, asking them personal details. As they are pestered by the clones and their translators who all speak in a heavily accented English, and at one point even speak in Serbian, their dialogue forms an Eastern-European soup devoid of the intelligibility one would expect from a detailed mystery-themed plot, waiting to be deciphered: The clones ask a barrage of questions and make comments in a medley of Polish/Russian/Serbian accents: "Can I touch you? I look very like you? Are we the same? Look at you? Can I smell you? Your skin is so soft. I your sister. Are we the same? Look at me? [sic.]"

Additionally, the trope of the figure skater in popular American discourse is much more commonly associated with a Russian nationality, probably due to Russia's success in worldwide figure skating competitions. Either way, the "poor" execution of the accents emphasized by their alternating presence and absence, and their confusion between Russian and Polish contrasts starkly with the otherwise high production values of the film, and undercuts any sort of believability or "realism" that the rest of the film attempts to establish. Elena's father adds to the confusion because he speaks without any trace of an accent the entire film, which doesn't make sense because Elena has the thickest accent in the film. Also, it should be noted that the nationality of Elena and John bear no

influence on the basic functioning of the plot, hence the interchangeability between their Polish-ness and their Russian-ness without any set-backs to the narrative's advancement. The importance of their outsider status seems to parallel Vinterberg's own outsider identity from Hollywood. Thus the general infiltration strategy of this minor film is manifested in the diegesis of the films as well.

The 'abusive' muddling of language is central to It's All About Love's minor reworkings of Hollywood codes. The contrast between the high production values of the film (evidenced by the glossy visuals and the presence of major Hollywood stars) and the poverty of the film's spoken dialogue signals the breakdown in the film's coherence and complicity with the expectations associated with mainstream filmmaking. In other words, the parts that make up the assemblage known as Hollywood begin to dislodge from one another and reveal cracks in their intelligibility. The poverty of It's All About Love's dialogue serve as an aural stain on the film's pristine visuals, a detraction that prevents the visuals from being taken at face value. For example, in the previously mentioned scene where Elena is introduced to her clones, Elena herself responds to a question in a contrived "Russian" accent ("Yes, of course. Yes"), but throughout much of the film, she sounds simply like the American-born Claire Danes, speaking without any accent at all. One person on an online forum quoted by Mette Hjort had this to say about the film's dialogue: "[T]he script is a jumbled mess, and the actors' accents are confusingly inconsistent. In some cases [Claire] Danes and the miscast Phoenix speak accent-free, in their natural rhythms, using the phrases if native English speakers. In other scenes, their accents and phrases seem to be impersonating Boris and Natasha on Bullwinkle" (Hjort,

Small Nation 188). Hjort concludes that "It's All About Love fails, in both artistic and commercial terms, on account of its implausible story, wooden narration, and less than engaging performances" (Hjort, Small Nation 188). So while the film's style references Hollywood aesthetics, the 'failed' dialogue prevents it from being allied with the way that many Hollywood films operate ideologically within similar generic parameters (of the sci-fi, thriller, or romance film).

Deleuze and Guattari understand literature to be an assemblage (A Thousand Plateaus, 4), and style to be an assemblage of enunciation (A Thousand Plateaus 97). The assemblage of enunciation formed out of the accumulation of Hollywood conventions and stylistic devices is forced into "disarticulation" (a term used by Deleuze and Guattari to describe Kafka, Kafka 86) by the intentional use of botched accents. Martin-Jones comments on Deleuze and Guattari's account of Kafka's use of minor language when he writes: "To use a major voice in a minor way is to make it stutter or stammer" (Martin-Jones, Orphans 229). The use of awkward accents in It's All About Love function as a stutter or stammer because the results are the same: the faltering of a major language and its subsequent deterritorialization to make room for minor enunciations.

David Rodowick analyzes how a "division of voices from bodies" in Borom Sarret creates a distance between itself and classical cinema, and thus "the serial form of narration becomes a political cinema" (Time Machine 152, 163). It's All About Love functions similarly, as the use of bad accents creates a division of voices from bodies, especially because the voices most commonly associated with the stars Sean Penn (who plays John's brother and also speaks in a "Polish" accent), Joaquin Phoenix, and Claire

Danes is American English. The division between voices and bodies then sends the assemblage of Hollywood's major codes and conventions into flight in a process of deterritorialization. The accents can also be considered atypical expressions, since such a mismatch between big-budget aesthetics and illogically accented dialogue is quite uncommon. According to Deleuze and Gauttati "[t]he atypical expression constitutes a cutting edge of deterritorialization of language" (A Thousand Plateaus 99). It's All About Love uses atypical expressions within the heart of Hollywood so that the film cannot function solely along the major mode of signification that the film foregrounds, but is opened to further minoritarian reworkings on the political plane.

Similar uses of language can be found in films such as Zabriskie Point (Antonioni, 1970) and My Blueberry Nights (Kar-Wai, 2007). Both of these films mark forays into American cinema by international art-film directors who have previously worked in non-English language cinema. Like It's All About Love, these films throw a wrench in the otherwise smooth cinematic and narrative operations of their respective films that engage directly with questions about American cultural and political life. The directors of each of these three films are all outsiders to America and American cinema, yet each felt compelled to make films that mediate on the state of America through American imagery, symbolism, mythology and iconography. Each of these films differs greatly from one another, but it is interesting to point out that they all seem to have a tin ear for dialogue despite the presence of successful English speaking actors such as Jude Law and Natalie Portman in My Blueberry Nights. One the one hand, this could possibly be attributed to the directors unfamiliarity with the English language, but these examples

can more productively be read as marks of the films' transnationality. These accented enunciations of otherwise-conventional dialogue call attention to the constructedness of American society and mythology that these films challenge through film form, dialogue and politicized thematics. It's All About Love is abusive in its use of *impoverished* film dialogue to inflect the film's meaning through a molecular variation that depicts the machinic breakdown of the Hollywood assemblage.

In Dear Wendy the process of making minor the institutionalized mode of representation that undergirds classical cinema also can be theorized as a process of infiltration, though not in the same way as It's All About Love. Whereas dialogue is central to a minor reading of It's All About Love, in Dear Wendy this occurs more on the level of film genre. Though I by no means wish to equate film genre with a notion of film language, or language outright, genres do contain their own semantics and syntactics[30] that circulate and replay throughout American film history. Dear Wendy adopts many of the semantics of the western genre film, including cowboy hats, guns, and the small town. The film also places these semantic signifiers into the syntactic structure of the western that features tragic romance, a violent gun battle filled with bravado, and a Manichean struggle to uphold old-fashioned notions of ethics and morality. However, Dear Wendy jumbles the (semantic/syntactic) parts that constitute the genre in order to connect the western to its reified influence in the sphere of youth (screen) cultures. For example, the film's love story is between a boy, Dickie and his gun, Wendy, and opens with the protagonist Dick writing a love letter to his gun. The opening shot in the film is

[30] See Rick Altman's "A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film Genre" for more on how film genre can be read linguistically.

accompanied by Dick's voiceover narration, as he reads the letter aloud: "Dear Wendy, I am writing this letter to tell you the story of the two of us as I saw it, but never had the nerve to tell you face to face when we were still together. Maybe things would have gone differently if I had told you back then. Maybe things would not have had to end this way." This "romance" between a boy and the object of his misdirected desire humorously plays on America's (both real-life and filmic) gun obsession by scrambling the tropes of the western – "the gun" has taken the place of "the woman." Furthermore, the shoot-out at the end of the film results in all of "the Dandies" being killed at the hands of trigger-happy police force, so that the heroes die on the wrong side of the law, and the very corruption of the law prevails, countering the western's embedded genre expectations (and ideological preoccupations!). Unlike the classical western that insists on heterosexual romance, and the victory of a hero who establishes law and order – or at least a code of honour entrenched in the norms of masculinity – Dear Wendy represents the repressed teenage sexuality of the protagonists confusedly channeled towards futile and senseless gun violence. These modifications of the classic genre film corresponds to Patricia White's conception of how genre films (in her case, the road movie) can be made minor by reconfiguring the parts that assemble to create a genre film. The same can be said for Hervé Aubron's understanding of minor cinema, for he posits certain minor genre films whose rationale defies the dominant ideology imbedded in the generic values of classical cinema through minor revisionism.

Dear Wendy engages in a becoming-minor by foregrounding the semantic and syntactic elements of classical genre formulas, only to jumble the connecting points

between them: the gun is the love object, the law is chaos, the hero loses the gun battle. The film reorganizes the machinic parts of the genre film, plugging generic semantics into seemingly incompatible syntactic sockets and vice versa. Similarly to how It's All About Love reworks the classical sci-fi or romance film from within through *incompatible* or *impoverished* wooden dialogue that sends the classical filmic system into flight, Dear Wendy accomplishes a similar minoritarian task through a parallel use of a *dysfunctional* genre revisionism. The film maintains the veneer of a generic intelligibility, but dismantles and reassembles the generic parts from within, in turn enunciating a simultaneous critique of American gun culture and gun violence, and the film language that enables the continuous revitalization of American mythology rooted on the omnipotence of the gun.

Through the numerous strategies discussed, Dogville, Manderlay, It's All About Love and Dear Wendy all politicize language through minor reworkings of Hollywood film language and grammar, genre conventions and English-language dialogue. Each of these films is attentive to the constructedness of film language, spoken dialogue, and generic narrative structures, and the majoritarian forces that seek to naturalize these linguistic models for the sake of naturalizing dominant nationalist mythology embedded in majoritarian cinema with its ties to the molar institutions of the nation-states. The minor reworkings of these films on the molecular plane of language forces the spectator into thought about the make-up of dominant cinema invoked by these films, and consequentially about the role of America in a globalized world abound with transnational screen cultures.

Chapter Five: Guattari's Part-Signs and The (Body) Politics of Perception and Love

"[T]he remaining private sphere – family, personal life, free time, and perhaps even fantasy and dreams – everything... became subjected to the semiotics of capital"

(Félix Guattari and Toni Negri, Communists Like Us 25)

"man can be in ecstatic contact with the cosmos only communally"

(Walter Benjamin, On Hashish 133)

In the closing section of Chapter 2, I suggest that It's All About Love reorganizes the cartography of love in order to insist on its extension beyond the confines of the romantic couple. Through this strategy, It's All About Love utters a collective enunciation that posits a people to come, or what I argue constitutes a multitude. Since Hardt and Negri's conception of the multitude is rooted in a politicized notion of love, representations of love in It's All About Love warrants further unpacking given that they are populated with romantic and sexual relationships. It's All About Love constructively re-maps and re-imagines a collective and politicized notion of love. It's All About Love unfolds like one of Félix Guattari's "schizo journeys" of *amour fou*, or crazed love that dismantles the couple through a privileging of a transnational collectivity, or what Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri term "multitude," as a rallying point for future collectivities that overrun the limits of national identity. In this chapter, I argue that Guattari's thoughts on love and madness enrich a politicized reading of perception in It's All About Love, allowing for a connection to be established between the film's use of colour and soundscapes to its reworking of the romance narrative arc to the potential for collective mobilization and social reorganization.

In a little-known piece, Guattari discusses Terrence Malick's 1973 film Badlands in the Parisian [then] leftist newspaper Libération. He expresses interest in the film's dual representation of love and madness and its "paradoxical structure [wherein] the film is built around the idea that [Kit, the main character] is not really mad," (Guattari, Chaosophy 247), but Guattari insists that he is. The same paradox rests at the heart of It's All About Love. John and Elena don't know who to trust, authenticity is in question, paranoia sets in, and the absurdity of the world prevents the characters from establishing stable mental co-ordinates in a universe of inconsistencies. It's All About Love similarly constructs a diegesis on a zone of indeterminacy between a potentially mad character subjectivity and objectivity in a mad world. This is precisely what Guattari identifies in Badlands as constitutive of a "schizo journey," where "at every turn, we are on the edge of madness" (Guattari, Chaosophy 247). Badlands and It's All About Love construct worlds on the edge of madness through what Guattari terms "a-signifying part-signs" which, according to Gary Genosko "provide lines of escape from the snares of representation" (Genosko, A Critical Introduction 146) and take the form of "colours, non-phonic sounds, rhythms, [and] faciality traits" (Genosko, A Critical Introduction 148). Similar to the "intense, agonizing blues" that attracts Guattari to Badlands, It's All About Love's film-style visualizes a narrative of *amour fou* through a colour palate of piercing blues, purples and yellows. Before looking at some examples of how these part-signs construct a potentially mad character subjectivity which short-circuit dominant modes of representation, it is worth quoting some of Guattari's most provocative thoughts on love and sexual relations, and the connection between sense/perception (which is

undoubtedly ever-present in loving/sexual relations) and its possible aesthetic expression.

Guattari points out that "the despotism which exists in conjugal or familial relationships arises from the same kind of libidinal disposition that exists in the broadest social field" (Guattari, Chaosophy 156). Varied societal institutions, just as conjugal or familial relations are sites of desire and its repression. Personal relations are necessarily social, inasmuch as desire can never be cut off from broader assemblages, as much as the mythos of romantic love may encourage such an isolation. Or to return to the second characteristic of a minor literature, the personal (and thus the sexual/conjugal/familial) is political. Guattari specifies his critique of closed familial relations with reference to Hollywood and its perpetuation of constraining (gendered) social types. He writes:

> The fact that a certain figure of the family has imploded is something we already know. It is not new: it becomes deterritorialized in the same speed of Integrated World Capitalism, spurred in fact by its very logic. What is left of it is an empty repetition of the post-Fordist conjugal cell and Hollywoodian characters – a certain figure of man, a certain figure of woman; a certain heterosexuality – entirely devoid of sense. Left without compass, diverse are the paths that we experiment[31] (Molecular Revolution in Brazil 417).

It's All About Love uses the empty repetition of the couple embodied by Elena's clones and their eagerness to endlessly perpetuate the repetitive and endless cycle of figure skating performances to show the trappings of molar identity and social types produced

[31] Hardt and Negri echo Guattari's thoughts on the bankruptcy of familial and conjugal affairs under capitalism. They write: "The modern concept of love is almost exclusively limited to the bourgeois couple and the claustrophobic confines of the nuclear family. Love has become a strictly private affair. We need a more generous and more unrestrained conception of love. We need to recuperate the public and political conception of love common to premodern traditions" (Multitude, 351)

by capitalistic subject-formation. Hollywood figures of man, woman and heterosexuality depend on a certain promise – despite how fantastical an illusionist Hollywood film may be, the formation of a monogamous couple has a real redemptive quality. This redemptive promise depends on the belief that the repression, exploitation and alienation that one experiences in the spheres of capitalist society outside of one's home and conjugal relationship can be mitigated, or even resolved by a 'successful' romantic coupling. This celebration of the romantic couple and the analogous notion that love conquers all implicitly accepts the state of the world, its suffering, its injustices, and worse, its modes of domination. It's All About Love reunites the once-separated couple but on the condition that the couple cannot collapse in on itself and remain closed off from the rest of the world. The film reworks the Hollywood romance narrative through a style and découpage that insists on the spectator's awareness of the couple's interconnectedness to global flows of people, weather and capital, also deploying Guattarian a-semiotic part-signs such as vivid colours and noises that give expression to the couple's lived-experience of this very interconnectedness. The film then effectively enacts what Guattari terms "sense without signification." Guattari writes:

> I assert that only *sense without signification* produced by a diagrammic economy of signs is able to thwart the dead ends specific to semiologies of signification, insofar as it introduces into semiotic assemblages an additional coefficient of deterritorialization allowing sign machines to simulate, 'duplicate,' and 'experience' the relational and structural nodes of material and social flows precisely at the points that would remain invisible to an anthropocentric vision

(The Machinic Unconscious 59).

The force of material and social flows upon the brain-screen are visible in It's All About Love, undercutting the reproduction of what is commonly presumed to be the anthropocentric vision central to almost all commercial and narrative cinema. "Asignifying components develop to some extent on the manure of signifying components; they proliferate like microscopic parasites on modes of subjectification and conscientalization" (Guattari, The Machinic Unconscious 51). Yet, it can be easy for a spectator only tuned in to the core/linguistic of the anthropocentric Hollywood film-signs – the faciality traits of the star, the gestural action, the dialogue, etc – to miss the political significance of sensing before and beyond the mediation of capitalist modes of signification. It's All About Love has been mistaken for bad-Hollywood fare, but as I describe below its radical political potentiality proliferates molecularly on the *excess* of Hollywood signification.

In an extreme close-up shot of John's face, highly saturated and constructed colour schemes unhinge the character's frame of mind from a state of stability that would more commonly be associated with a naturalized, realist colour palette. The blues and greens in this image do not take on a symbolic value, and they do not *represent* a state of mind; rather it is through the force of their intensity that they doubly circumvent the signifying logic of colour and the co-ordinates of a romance narrative based on coherence between a character's mental state and the diegesis. A similar use of colour occurs when John comes close to having a mental breakdown. Just before this occurs, a shallow-focus close up shot shows a distressed John in the foreground and blurred out lights in the background.

John's mental state is externalized and visualized through blurred light and colour that affects the spectator with the same force that it presumably affects John. This connection between his mental state and the mental state of the spectator signifies in excess of symbolic semiologies *representing* mental-states; this excess is precisely the a-signifying force that remains. These uses of colour and light – a-signifying material – shift an otherwise cause-and-effect narrative onto a plane of affects, impressions and appearances.

Later in the film, John has a paralyzing headache and anxiously drinks a glass of water. A loud rumbling of static and thunder takes over the soundtrack, but does not correspond to any specific source within the diegesis. The a-signifying noise again evokes the sensation of John's mental state, as John's tormented psyche runs along these a-semiotic currents, expressing rather than representing itself, connecting to global vibrations and cosmic disturbances. The rumbling shakes the diegesis, yet it is arguably emitted from within John's head. Is the spectator then provoked to identify with John to the extent that he or she is "in John's head" so to speak? Does this mean that the rumbling is only something John experiences or is the noise coming from the storm outside? The abusive intervention of a sonic part-sign in the chain of signification that expresses Hollywood romance-content produces psychological indeterminacy. Romance narrative arcs are premised on the mental stability of both characters and the implicit representation of this stability through adherence to clearly intelligible formal conventions. In Vinterberg's film, the formal conventions are disrupted by this a-signifying aesthetic excess and/as force.

Images of Elena and her clones also express the processes of a-signifying part-signs at work. The similar clothes, make-up and bright red lipstick worn by Elena and the clones do not represent their similarity, but rather aesthetically construct them through the same a-semiotic and affective building materials within the same plane of reality, a parallel to how they are all constructed out of the same genetic material. The clones are as real as Elena and Elena is as artificial as the clones, and a confusion between authenticity and artifice plays out, between the singular (Elena) and the multiple (her clones). Can Elena's visions of clones be trusted? Is she hallucinating or has the unimaginable become a reality? Who is the 'real' Elena? In a world where colours, noises, intensities and affects confuse the original and the clone, sanity and madness are similarly confused and scrambled.

The madness that pervades It's All About Love is triggered when John first catches sight of Elena, and both characters wear eye-catching purple. This parallels how according to Guattari, in Badlands "[f]rom the moment [Kit] sees he girl, a machine of *amour fou* is triggered" (Guattari, Soft Subversions, 253). It's All About Love's costuming in this scene where the lovers meet, and throughout much of the film visually links the couple through colour, and distinguishes them from their surroundings and social milieu. Of importance here is that the couple's shared colour scheme corresponds to a shared consciousness about the state of the world. Unlike everyone else in the city, they are seemingly the only two people affected by death, and the fact that there are dead bodies scattered throughout the city. Their shared aversion to the dead body on the subway steps distinguishes their behaviour from the normal etiquette in Vinterberg's 2021 New York

which is simply to "step over it." Colour is consciousness and its movements are analogous to movements of affect, thought, and sensation. The way that perception is coloured (and discoloured, over-coloured, or repetitively coloured) reflects the fusing and formation (or even cloning) of character and spectator subjectivities – their psychic constitution through colour-consciousness. In It's All About Love, colour connects immediately to mental (in)stability and in large part determines the effects of the film outside of, and in spite of narrative semiology[32] and filmic semiotics.

As John and Elena take flight from an absurd form of familial repression, their movement, and possible madness effectively shakes off prior constellations of subjectivity that grounded their identities. They engage in a becoming-other. On the run, John is no longer a literature professor, and Elena is no longer a world-renowned figure skater – their flight from the order of their past lives results in their becoming-nomad. More importantly, John and Elena were unable to love each other when they were both firmly wedged into Elena's familial assemblage. In taking flight, challenging the familial hierarchy and their positions within it, they by extension challenge their previous responsibilities within the capitalistic system more generally. Love becomes possible only once John and Elena self-construct their subjectivities outside of the dictates of IWC, when they acknowledge and auto-critique the state of the world and their place in it, and then act and move in accordance with this (self-)knowledge. The turbulence of the world, and their connections to its raw energy, and rhizomatic a-semiotic flows forces these characters to relate to one another on a new plane of subjectivization; put simply, they do not rediscover their love, but love each other differently. The love story between

[32] Guattari distinguishes between semiology and semiotic in The Machinic Unconscious p.22

John and Elena is truly a case of *amour fou* because the rekindling of their love is predicated on a delve into madness, on an acknowledgement of shared experiences that cannot be reduced to their linguistic express-ability. John and Elena were unable to love each other when their identities were yoked to molar subject-formations, but as their previous normalized beliefs about the coherence of the world comes undone and gives way to a shared consciousness expressed through germinating colour, love deterritorializes from the constraints of marriage and family, and thrives on the margins of society in smooth, snowed-over spaces of unmappable territory.

It's All About Love opens up the claustrophobic confines of the romantic couple through the film's colour and sound intensities that multiply connections between disparate elements: the lush yellow of Elena's ritzy hotel room to the arid yellow of the Ugandan landscape, the purple of John and Elena's clothes to the purple skyline over a snow-filled Paris, Elena's red lipstick to the blood-stained assassinated clones, the green in John's eyes to the New York traffic lights, etc. As a result, flows of affect and desire establish new, shifting co-ordinates of love that are necessarily collective, global, transnational, and thus political because they challenge national master narratives based on homogenous collectivities that must repress truly radical differences or singularities. Guattari himself emphasizes how a-semiotic flows of sense transform and deterritorialize the subject towards the collective. He writes: "It is in reaction to subjective deterritorialization, which is 'steered' either by a consciental transformation of resonance or by a desubjectivizing diagrammatic transformation, that a system of a collective appreciation of sense will be able to stabilize" (Guattari, The Machinic Unconscious 72).

In recognizing the flows of part-signs that work prior to representation and serve to undermine Hollywood's signifying logic, including its insistence on *individuated* character psychology, It's All About Love plays the majoritarian romance of Hollywood in a minor key, and also recognizes the potential for challenging the current global order through new socio-political formations that recognize and respond to the desires of the multitude that challenge and exceed limits of national identity. Berardi writes: "Minor literature is the gaze from the outside, the gaze of somebody who observes the ritual without knowing the code and thus understands its a-signifying nature" (Berardi 91). It's All About Love provides us with this gaze that understands the a-signifying components of Hollywood codes, and calls for a collectivity around this shared gaze.

The collective quality of the love that It's All About Love calls for is clearly in line with Hardt and Negri's identification of love's potentially revolutionary charge, which is itself inspired by Deleuzo-Guattarian becoming. Hardt and Negri write:

> The multiplicity of the multiple is not just a matter of being different but also becoming different. Become different that you are! These singularities, act in common and thus form a new race, that is, a politically co-ordinated subjectivity that the multitude produces. The primary decision made by the multitude is really the decision to create a new race, or rather, a new humanity. When love is conceived politically, then this creation of a new humanity is the ultimate act of love (Multitude, 356).

This insistence on becoming-different, on creating a new humanity based on love is doubly important. Firstly, becoming is central to the transformations of John and Elena's

subjectivities throughout the course of It's All About Love as they become-nomad. Secondly, it corresponds to this thesis' emphasis on a minor cinema that challenges national identity. Hardt and Negri's call for love based on becoming-different, is also a call for undercutting rigid identities. This reinforces Guattari's statement that "identity is what causes singularity to pass from different ways of existing to a single identifiable frame of reference" (Molecular Revolution in Brazil, 94). If identity places limits on a singularity's frame of reference, then it also places limits on a people's capacity to (be)come-other, to open onto new modes of social organization. While limits are not necessarily counter-productive or counter-revolutionary (the very innovation of Dogme 95 grows out of limits), national identity inherently acts to prevent progressive collective mobilization that expresses the desire of the subaltern whose interests lie in overturning the power structures embedded in the nation-state. It's All About Love's use of intensive part-signs that short-circuit standardized commercial film-style to express a minor romance of *amour fou* allows for the suggestion that mad-love can actually form the basis for revolutionary collectivities. Mad-love unhinges capitalistic subjectivity, rhizomatically connects desire to currents beyond the couple, and therefore collectivizes (and by extension politicizes) the personal and sexual without reterritorializing onto the plane of national identity and its tired rhetoric.

The force of a-signifying part-signs that challenge anthropocentric vision and undercut the primacy of vision over bodies and sense in It's All About Love also leads to a consideration of how the body becomes a site of politics. Guattari's brief interview responses evoking Badlands and a cinema of *amour fou* do not delve into how exactly the

body is implicated in love, sex, marriage or madness. It's All About Love is certainly attentive to the politics of the body and this attentiveness compliments the film's schizo-journey along a path of *amour fou* where affective a-signifying material forces are felt and sensed by the bodies of John and Elena, and these feelings are then redirected through intense colours towards the spectator. The film features two sex scenes and a drama about cloning; the body is certainly a fundamental site of the film's political engagement, and rightfully so. As Erin Manning points out: "Politics is not beyond the body it is of the body" (Politics of Touch 121)[33]. When John and Elena take flight, their love reignites. There are two sex scenes that confirm their revitalized desire for living life (Elena used to be a heroin addict, so had dabbled with death), and for each other. These sexual encounters occur when it is freezing outside (even though it is the summer). The frigid conditions encircle their relationship, surrounding them, encouraging their desire to reunite physically. The high degree of alienation under capitalism is manifested thermodynamically, and permeates the social field. The state of the world is devoid of meaningful connection, meaningful touch, touch that carries the desire to transform the world. John and Elena's sexual (re)connections happen outside the domain of marriage, without the sanction of Elena's father, on the run from the repressive arm of the state. The positioning of their fugitive bodies, conjoin in defiance of the normalized mass acceptance of the status quo in Vinterberg's 2021 and thrive only outside of the state's

[33] Franco Berardi echoes Manning's emphasis on the interconnectedness between the body and politics. He also expands on this connection to account for the importance of emotion and sense, two central components of It's All About Love, given my discussion of the relationship between sense and a-signifying material. Berardi writes: "Capitalistic acceleration, the rarefaction of the contact between bodies, replaced by communication, planetary ethnic deterritorialization, the disagregation [sic] and collapse of traditional anthropological models: all of these act on the modalities of elaboration of the social mind and above all, on sensibility. *The emotional body is the site in which the most delicate and extreme of battles is being waged*" (32) [italics are my emphasis].

reach.

Fugitive sex makes use of the body as a desiring site of resistance to the state. Erin Manning delineates what is at stake in the uneven and tumultuous relationship between the body and the state. She writes:

> Conceivably, the nation-state could be called the body-state. This is why the state's body-politic is so focused on drawing an image of the body that must remain dependent on the imaginary of the nation-state. If we remove the body from the state, the conflation of identity and territory cannot be sustained. If we imagine the body not as a container that returns to the state for sustenance, but that challenges the state's pre-determined enclosures of belonging and insecurity through its unpredictable states of metamorphosis, we are left with a state-less body and body-less state. This state-less body touches across space and time, not reaching toward striated grids of intelligibility but toward new networks of power/knowledge. This body is alive in its infralanguage, not in its silent recitations of the state's incarnations of sovereignty (Politics of Touch 64).

Love outside of sovereignty, sense outside of signification, sex outside of state – bodies in It's All About Love certainly do reach towards new networks of power/knowledge, towards a multitude that defies the state's empty claims to sovereignty over the body. The film's critique of the status quo that is Empire is largely advanced through the figure of Elena's clones. The clones are a perverse concoction of capitalist power that possesses the body and first world privilege, traffics the body from impoverished zones in Eastern Europe, holds patriarchal influence over the female body and orchestrates the mass

craving for infantilizing spectacles of femininity. Elena's clones are the automatons who do as they are told, worship Elena, internalizing her identity as their own without any regard for the cycles of exploitation that this perpetuates. The clones are without creative capacity and are incapable of original thought or loving touch. They are bodies emptied of political intention, and receptacles of a regurgitated semiosis. John and Elena's shared refusal to be silenced and contained is precisely why they are a threat to the state and why "states live in fear of bodies" (Manning, Politics of Touch xxii). States live in fear not only of bodies but of sensing bodies, bodies of *amour fou.* If "love serves as the basis for political projects in common and the construction of a new society," as Hardt and Negri suggest (Multitude 351), then Vinterberg's report on the state of the world which concludes with the title line "it's all about love," is really about re-defining love, and advancing a mad-love that renders the most seemingly personal of all emotions, collective, and thus political.

Conclusion

This thesis has deployed the theory of minor cinema in an attempt to figure the political relevance of the Danish films It's All About Love, Dogville, Manderlay, and Dear Wendy. The thesis seeks to expand the ways that these films uniquely link politics and aesthetics. A key focus of the thesis has been these films' critique of Americanism/nationalism in the age of Empire. The anti-nationalist critiques advanced by these films has in turn allowed for this thesis to re-consider the nation-derived framework that under-pins much of the contemporary scholarship on the theory of minor cinema. Not only does this thesis question the viability of nation-based models of minor cinema, it also troubles the previously perceived compatibility between the theory of minor cinema, and its embedded sub-concepts such as "collective enunciation" and "people to come," with strictly national groupings. Instead, this thesis follows the critiques advanced within the four films in order to call for an intrinsically transnational and global minor cinema – a minor cinema capable of responding to the stratified modes of control and domination integrated under global capital.

In addition to challenging the tendency towards nation-state models within scholarship on minor cinema, the thesis also privileges the oft-overlooked contributions of Félix Guattari to the theory of minor cinema. In addition to the book on Kafka written by Deleuze and Guattari, this thesis addresses Guattari's dispersed and more obscure writings on minor cinema which emphasize the importance of cinematic a-signifying part-sings that (in)form film aesthetics. Additionally, the thesis also engages with Guattari's writings on a cinema of anti-psychiatry/*amour fou* because the "alternative

canon" of films that Guattari mentions in these writings enrich the theory of minor cinema, providing concrete film examples and analyses that differ from Deleuze and Guattari's shared approach to Kafka, and Deleuze's own writings on what he terms "modern political cinema".

After surveying the contemporary film studies scholarship on minor cinema in chapter one and testing the applicability of the theory to It's All About Love, Dogville, Manderlay, and Dear Wendy in chapter two, the thesis goes on analyze the films on the molecular level. Chapter three finds that these films, in their critique of American exceptionalism are astute in the attention that they pay to the politics of space. Each of the films use aesthetic experimentation and narrative cues to foreground movement in/through space, so as to reinforce the thematic critiques of Americanism/nationalism with attention to how nation-states demarcate space to limit and restrict movement through the cultural currency of normalized patriarchy. The attention paid to space, and limitations on movement through space, in these films, and in chapter three compliments the thesis' earlier arguments about the need to think of a transnational, rather than national, minor cinema. Chapter four is also attentive to the transnational through its discussion of the politics of language in the four films. These films' use of film-dialogue reconfigures American movie-English through a "stuttering" or impoverished film-dialogue that undercuts the naturalized dominance of *unaccented* English in cinema. And finally, chapter five concludes these close film analyses with a deployment of Guattari's theory of cinematic a-signifying part-signs to theorize how It's All About Love triggers a machine of *amour fou*. It's All About Love, as the cutting edge of an assemblage

comprised of these four films, can be considered a work of minor cinema that bridges both Guattari's solo writings and Guattari's collaborative work with Deleuze. The film constructs a potentially-mad character subjectivity through part-signs that circumvent the dominant signifying logic of commercial cinema, in addition to undercutting the ideological presuppositions of the romance narrative arc.

The pressing question that must eventually be answered, is: are It's All About Love, Dogville, Manderlay, and Dear Wendy works of minor cinema? Yes and no; much more yes than no. Each of the four films were released at the height of the Bush-Cheney era and its accompanying disastrous foreign policy and hard-right rhetoric, and each of the films challenge the historical era's dominant (American) ideology. The films accomplish this through politicizing space, language and perception, attacking American exceptionalism and its roots in American mythology through a re-imagining of the Hollywood couple, and the couple's relationship to society more generally. During a highly tumultuous period in American and world history when Hollywood proved incapable of radically challenging the status quo, these four films by Vinterberg and von Trier provided representations of America through a European cultural imaginary that did indeed confront both the socio-political climate and Hollywood's complicity in it all. Each of these films proves capable of connecting to counter-publics disenchanted with the state of the world and America's place in it. Furthermore, these films do not counter Americanism with a reterritorialization onto a European or Danish nationalism, but rather provoke multitude-formations through transnational collective enunciations consisting of a high coefficient of deterritorialization, such as; nomadic characters on lines of flight,

botched English dialogue, blacked-out mise-en-scène, etc. The films remained open and accessible to large segments of the global population through the use of star-images and the English language as popular vehicles. The films used the major code of English and Hollywood genre to speak to alienated and politically frustrated global populations, an audience who may not otherwise have seen these highly subversive films. Yet the films play Hollywood in a minor key, raising political consciousness and opening up the possibility that transnational audiences reassess their relationship to commercial American cinema.

While these films can certainly be read as works of minor cinema for the numerous reasons that the thesis has outlined, this is not an attempt to create a canon of minor films, or to hail Lars von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg as "minor auteurs" – quite the opposite. The rationale for considering the 2003-2005 assemblage of von Trier and Vinterberg films as a minor assemblage is their shared transnational expression of shared political and thematic concerns during the same era of American history. The methodology that this thesis has followed figures the theory of minor cinema as a tool that can be productive in key situations, depending on the political climate and historical circumstances. A film can at one point in time constitute a collective enunciation and provoke a multitude's becoming-minor, yet completely change its meaning, and thus function differently in a different historical moment when the milieu and circumstances surrounding the film has changed. This thesis has read these films as an "event" of minor cinema, as a transnational assemblage that produced certain deterritorializing effects that connected a constellation of minor enunciation with a collectivity/multitude.

Six to eight years later, in today's changed American and world socio-political climate, not to mention the altered public perception of Lars von Trier due to mass-media coverage of his comments at the 2011 Cannes film festival, this assemblage of films will undoubtedly produce different types of spectatorial responses. Or, as Guattari lucidly points out: "any reading of the past is inevitably overcoded by our references to the present" (Guattari, Chaosmosis, 99). Here, I have modestly attempted to show that Deleuze and Guattari's theory of the minor, in addition to Guattari's solo writings on the "minor" and political cinema, can be used productively to map the highly political aesthetic experimentation which earmarks how the Dogme brothers "did America/Hollywood." By traversing the Dogme brothers' experimental terrain, this thesis hopes to unseat the nation and its majoritarian predispositions from its unduly privileged – and dangerous – position in the scholarship on minor cinema.

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